### Cuba Oil 1NC

#### Russia pursuing agreement to drill the shelf – key to Russian oil growth—plan crowds Russia out

Snytkova 2013

[Maria Snytkova 3/1/2013 “Russia to supply Cuban oil to USA?”,

http://english.pravda.ru/business/companies/01-03-2013/123941-russia\_cuba\_oil-0]

Many became highly concerned last week, when it was said that Russia was forgiving Cuba nearly $30 billion of debt. What a gesture of good will! Journalists speculated that Russia had thus received access to the Cuban shelf. Afterwards, Russia will be able to explore and extract mineral resources in Cuban waters.¶ As they say, friendship and money do not mix. Why did Russia suddenly become so generous and publicly announced the decision to write off Cuba's debt of $30 billion. According to the Kommersant, it is certainly not the matter of forgiveness. The Russian authorities have laid the eye on the Cuban shelf, where company Zarubezhneft (Russia) began drilling in deep areas in December 2012. This phase of the exploration of the Cuban shelf will end only in June 2013.¶ To date, nothing has been said whether Zarubezhneft has found something or not. However, experts say that there was obviously a good reason, for which the Russian authorities forgave Cuba the Soviet debt only a month after the exploration works began. Apparently, in addition to fine cigars and rum, the Cubans have found something to offer to the Russians, experts say.¶ ¶ "The Cuban shelf is quite promising, with a large resource base, but, for the time being, it has not been developed, so the work on the Cuban shelf bears certain risks for both Russian and other companies, - Investkafe analyst Julia Voitovich told Pravda.Ru. - There are risks that some geological reserves may not be confirmed. Nevertheless, I believe that it is beneficial for Russia to participate in the development of the Cuban shelf not just to increase oil production and sales, but also to receive additional technologies and experience on the shelf. Largely, the work of our Russian companies abroad, including in foreign shelf projects, primarily pursues the goal to obtain technological capabilities. And I think that from this point of view, the work on the Cuban shelf of Russia would be interesting."¶ Meanwhile, the Kommersant newspaper, looking ahead, wrote what place Russia can take on the world market, should the wildest dreams come true and a significant amount of minerals is found on the Liberty Island. If Russia finds oil there, the country may become a supplier of hydrocarbons for the United States.¶ Assumptions of large reserves of black gold on the north coast of Cuba first appeared in 2008. Several companies started to explore the Cuban shelf: Venezuela's PdVSA, Petronas of Malaysia, the Spanish Repsol, and the Russian Zarubezhneft. However, the results were bleak. Oil was not found, but Russia believed that it was early to give up. The work that Zarubezhneft currently conducts on the shelf targets deeper parts of the coastal areas of Cuba.¶ The interest of the Russian company is also based on the agreement with the Cuban state company Cupet, which both parties signed in the autumn of 2009. In this document it was said that should Russian developers find oil, then Zarubezhneft would be entitled to share products with the Cuban state company up till 2034. Russians rigs will not be removed from the region before summer.¶ However, the Cuban shelf is not the most important factor when it comes to the Cuban debt to Russia. Russia and Cuba may open a new stage of relations with each other. During his recent visit to Cuba, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed ten agreements with President Raul Castro. Incidentally, there was not a single representative of the oil sector among the Russian delegation.

#### Russian access to Gulf oil key to their economy and broader influence

Ryan 2010

[Jane Van - former senior communications manager and new media advisor at the American Petroleum Institute (API), Mar 19, 2010, “Russia/Cuba Seeking Oil in the Gulf of Mexico”, <http://energytomorrow.org/blog/2010/march/russia-cuba-seeking-oil-in-the-gulf-of-mexico#sthash.3IgSFW8u.dpuf>, TB]

America's "stuck in neutral" energy policy has just received another shot over the bow. This time it comes from Russia, which is one of several countries that are actively seeking oil and natural gas resources in the Western Hemisphere.¶ A Washington Times editorial discusses Moscow's four contracts with Cuba which will allow Russia to explore for oil in Cuban waters in the Gulf of Mexico. The Times editorial staff writes:¶ "Russia more sensibly views energy primarily as a strategic resource. Energy is critical to Russia's economy, as fuel and as a source of profit through export. Russia also has used energy as a coercive diplomatic tool, shutting off natural gas piped to Eastern Europe in the middle of winter to make a point about how dependent the countries are that do business with the Russians...From Russia's perspective, this is another way to gain leverage inside what traditionally has been America's sphere of influence."¶ The Times says Russian oil exploration in the Gulf might not be as "dramatic" as the Cuban Missile Crisis, but it could signal a shift in America's stature abroad.

#### Russian economic deterioration leads terrorism and nuclear conflict resulting in extinction.

Sheldon Filger 2009 “Russian Economy Faces Disastrous Free Fall Contraction” May 10, 2009, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sheldon-filger/russian-economy-faces-dis_b_201147.html>]

In Russia, historically, economic health and political stability are intertwined to a degree that is rarely encountered in other major industrialized economies. It was the economic stagnation of the former Soviet Union that led to its political downfall. Similarly, Medvedev and Putin, both intimately acquainted with their nation's history, are unquestionably alarmed at the prospect that Russia's economic crisis will endanger the nation's political stability, achieved at great cost after years of chaos following the demise of the Soviet Union. Already, strikes and protests are occurring among rank and file workers facing unemployment or non-payment of their salaries. Recent polling demonstrates that the once supreme popularity ratings of Putin and Medvedev are eroding rapidly. Beyond the political elites are the financial oligarchs, who have been forced to deleverage, even unloading their yachts and executive jets in a desperate attempt to raise cash. Should the Russian economy deteriorate to the point where economic collapse is not out of the question, the impact will go far beyond the obvious accelerant such an outcome would be for the Global Economic Crisis. There is a geopolitical dimension that is even more relevant then the economic context. Despite its economic vulnerabilities and perceived decline from superpower status, Russia remains one of only two nations on earth with a nuclear arsenal of sufficient scope and capability to destroy the world as we know it. For that reason, it is not only President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin who will be lying awake at nights over the prospect that a national economic crisis can transform itself into a virulent and destabilizing social and political upheaval. It just may be possible that U.S. President Barack Obama's national security team has already briefed him about the consequences of a major economic meltdown in Russia for the peace of the world. After all, the most recent national intelligence estimates put out by the U.S. intelligence community have already concluded that the Global Economic Crisis represents the greatest national security threat to the United States, due to its facilitating political instability in the world. During the years Boris Yeltsin ruled Russia, security forces responsible for guarding the nation's nuclear arsenal went without pay for months at a time, leading to fears that desperate personnel would illicitly sell nuclear weapons to terrorist organizations. If the current economic crisis in Russia were to deteriorate much further, how secure would the Russian nuclear arsenal remain? It may be that the financial impact of the Global Economic Crisis is its least dangerous consequence.

### Influence 1NC

#### Russia is focused on expanding into Latin America – part of its grand strategy to increase international credibility

Sudarev 2012

[Vladimir Sudarey, Doctor of Political Science, Professor of the European and American Countries’ History and Politics Department of the MGIMO University, “" Is Russia returning to Latin America?"” February 20, 2012, http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id\_4=252#top]

Latin American region has recently been often mentioned among new priority dimensions of Russian foreign policy. Despite the difficulties of both objective and subjective nature, the comeback of Russia to Latin America can provide it with new reliable partners and strengthen its position in a nascent multi-polar world. The nineties can be regarded as lost years for Russian policy in Latin America. In fact, Russia didn’t pursue any policy there. Traditionally, as in the Soviet times, this region stood low on the national foreign policy agenda. Of course, there have been undertaken some successful actions – for example, in 1996-1997 Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov paid visits to the region during which the whole package of agreements on cooperation with Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, and, most importantly, with Brazil (about strategic partnership in the 21 century and creation of a greater Russia-Brazil committee) were signed. But these actions were only sporadic, and the signed agreements turned out to be suspended. What is more, it was in the early 1990-s after Russia’s withdrawal from Cuba, with abandoning the construction of about 500 major facilities and decreasing 30-fold trade turnover with this country [1], when West-oriented Russia started to be perceived in Latin America as an unreliable partner. The U-turn in Russian foreign policy after 9/11 contributed to it greatly. Having declared about the readiness of Russia to join the US-sponsored anti-terrorist coalition, President Putin on October 17, 2001 announced the withdrawal of the country from the only overseas strategic site - surveillance radar station in Lurdes on the outskirts of Havana – without prior notification of the Cuban side [2]. Make-or-break moment in the relationships with Latin America region countries occurred in the wake of the Yeltzin era. Latin American countries themselves seem to have contributed a lot to it. Already in 1999 the Rio Group uniting the region’s leading states turned out to be, actually, the only grouping in the world which condemned the bombing of Yugoslavia and pointed out in its declaration specific articles of the UN Charter violated by the NATO member- states [3]. In February 2003 Mexico and Chili as non-permanent UN SC members, in fact, vetoed the second Anglo-American resolution authorizing Iraq intervention, despite their economic dependence on the USA. These actions seem to have made the Kremlin look at the perspectives of cooperation with Latin American countries at a new angle. Thus, in March 2003 President Putin received in Kremlin the delegation of the Rio Group and held official talks with them. Both sides agreed not to confine themselves to regular contacts (launched in 1995) within the framework of the UN General Assembly, but also conduct meetings in Russia and countries of the Group member-states. By mid-decade the exchange of high level delegations between the sides had intensified. Only one example, in November 2008 President Medvedev visited four countries during his tour of the region - Peru, Brazil, Venezuela and Cuba. Commenting on his visit, President Medvedev remarked: “…we visited the states which previous Russian leaders had never been to… It means only that we failed to pay due attention to these countries before, and, to a certain extent, it is only now that we are starting a full-fledged and I hope mutually beneficial cooperation with the heads of these states and between our economies. он отметил: We mustn’t be shy and timid and be afraid of competition. We must boldly engage in the battle”. In order to display its interest to the presence in the region Russia resorted to a number of un-common and spectacular actions. In November 2008 a warship squadron with the fleet nuclear-powered cruiser “Peter the Great” of the Russian Navy as a flagship entered the territorial waters of US-hostile Venezuela to participate in joint naval exercises of the North Fleet of the Russian Federation Navy. Simultaneously, within the framework of the resumed patrolling of the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans two Russian long-range strategic bombers landed at a Venezuelan naval base. The so-called comeback of Russia to Latin America was to a great extent preconditioned by the “leftist drift” in the region which resulted in the emergence of the group of states that viewed the expanding relations with Russia as an important lever for strengthening their position in conflict relations with the USA. Many of these countries perceived Russia as the successor of the former USSR might and influence, with the vision of a new world order of both sides being practically identical – it should be multilateral, not individually tailored to the interests of a single superpower. This position was set out in numerous joint documents signed at the summits – practically all the leaders of the most prominent Latin American countries paid official visits to Moscow during the first decade of the 21st century. The breakthrough happened also in the military and technical field. Starting from 2004 Venezuela has begun purchases of scale of the Russian arms to the amount of over $4bln. Russia established military and technical cooperation with other countries of the region apart from Venezuela: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia also procured Russian military hardware. Russia tried to establish closer economic ties with its major partners in the region. At the end of the decade Russia’s oil and gas producing companies LUKOIL and GASPROM were already operating in Venezuela. RUSAL made heavy investments in bauxite industry of Guyana. ROSNEFT got its chunk for oil exploration in Cuban shelf of the Mexican Gulf. Trade between Russia and the countries of the region has been roaring recently – over the last decade trade turnover has tripled and amounted to $15bln [4]. However, despite the qualitative changes in the structure of Russian export – the share of machinery and equipment has a little increased – it still leaves much to be desired. Take Brazil, for example: mineral fertilizers have made up 90% of Russian export, while Brazil has been exporting to Russia mostly meat and tropical goods. Largely, Brazil has always been the weakest link of Russia’s regional policy despite its participation in the BRIC group. At any rate, the role of Brazil in Russia’s foreign policy is much smaller than those of China and India. It should be recognized that Russia has failed so far to establish strategic partnership with Brazil, which had been planned for as early as 1997. It can be largely attributed to the fact that Russian leadership has no priority system in interacting with this country. The latter, from our perspective, is explained by poor understanding of how much inter-complimentary could be the interests of the two resource-rich countries in the decades to come. Unfortunately, China, and lately India have been much more economically active in the region than Russia, filling the niches in the market that could have been well filled by Russia. Another question is why Brazilian dimension of Russian foreign policy is much weaker than the Chinese one? Why do we transfer to China, the relationships with which in the 20th century were abundant with conflicts including the armed ones, unique military aircraft building technologies, while denying this to Brazil with which we have never had conflicts or clashes on the international arena? Perhaps, it is the residual principle inherent of the USSR leadership and successfully inherited in 1990-s by the Russian leadership that is applied to this region. But, while the USSR used to have Cuba as a strategic partner, the Russian Federation, having curtailed the ties with the Island of Freedom, didn’t bother to start looking for new partners and paid as little attention to the relations with Brazil as with any other Latin American country. If Russia is really interested in serious and politically influential partners, then it is the Brazil dimension that should be prioritized as the major vector of Russian policy in the region. It means establishing a special system of partnership which will include an overhaul of the current system of trade and economic relations, an introduction of a new system of preferential terms of advanced know-how transfer and exchange, particularly in aerospace field. For that sake it’s necessary to maximally intensify the relations with Brazil’s leadership and take them to a higher level, with the head of state or the government taking control of it. However, the growing understanding of the Russian upper echelons of power of the necessity to shift the focus of economic cooperation with the countries of the region on to scientific and technical sphere arouses certain optimism. It is in the field of advanced technologies where Russia is most competitive, and no wonder that the main emphasis during the April 2010 visit of President Medvedev to the countries of the region was laid on this very issue. Low competitiveness of Russia vis-à-vis other countries undertaking huge efforts with a view to building up their political and economic position in this region continues to persist. Besides, our investment capability is also much lower than that of USA, China, EU and even India. Nonetheless, in spite of the difficulties, both objective and subjective, the trend of Russia’s presence expansion in the region may gain further momentum in the forthcoming decades, provided adequate efforts are taken. In this case Latin American dimension of Russian foreign policy has all chances to make it a separate independent direction which can win Russia new beneficial partners and enhance its position in a nascent multi-polar world.

#### US encroachment makes US-Russia war inevitable

**Carpenter and Logan 2009**

[Carpenter, Ted Galen, and Justin Logan. "Cato Handbook for Policymakers." *Relations with China, India, and Russia*. CATO, 2009. Web.MA]

Few people want to return to the animosity and tensions that marked¶ relations between Washington and Moscow throughout the cold war. But¶ clumsy policies by both the United States and Russia now threaten to¶ bring back those unhappy days. Washington continues to press for further¶ expansion of NATO to Russia’s border and is meddling in parochial¶ disputes between Russia and its small neighbor Georgia. For its part, the¶ Medvedev-Putin regime shows signs of trying to cause headaches for the¶ United States in the Caribbean.¶ Both governments need to adopt more cautious policies. Secretary of¶ State Condoleezza Rice once famously dismissed the concept of spheres¶ of influence as an obsolete notion, and that view has become all too¶ common among America’s foreign policy elite. But that doctrine is very¶ much alive, and U.S. and Russian leaders ignore that reality at their peril. If a new cold war emerges, Washington will have done much to invite¶ it. But Russia has become needlessly provocative as well. The dark hints¶ in summer 2008 that it might station bombers in Cuba were reckless. For¶ Americans, even the possibility that Moscow might deploy a nuclear capable weapon system in Cuba brings back memories of the most nightmarish episode of the cold war—the Cuban missile crisis. No American¶ government would tolerate such a move—nor should it. Moscow’s growing flirtation with Venezuela’s Hugo Cha´vez, an obnoxious nemesis of¶ the United States, is also creating gratuitous tensions. Moscow’s joint air¶ and naval exercises with Venezuelan military forces in September 2008¶ especially did not improve relations with America.¶ Those moves likely reflect mounting Russian anger at U.S. policies¶ that seem calculated to undermine Russia’s influence in its own backyard¶ and even humiliate Moscow. Washington’s ‘‘in your face’’ approach is¶ not a recent development. U.S. officials took advantage of Russia’s economic and military disarray during the 1990s to establish a dominant¶ position in central and eastern Europe. Washington successfully engineered¶ the admission of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to NATO in¶ 1998—over the Yeltsin government’s objections. That expansion of the¶ alliance was nonprovocative, though, compared with the second round¶ earlier this decade that incorporated Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, entities¶ that had been part of the Soviet Union.

#### The impact is extinction

Bostrom 2002

[Nick, Dir. Future of Humanity Institute and Prof. Philosophy – Oxford U., Journal of Evolution and Technology, “Analyzing Human Extinction Scenarios and Related Hazards”, 9, March, <http://www.nickbostrom.com/existential/risks.html>]

The first manmade existential risk was the inaugural detonation of an atomic bomb. At the time, there was some concern that the explosion might start a runaway chain-reaction by “igniting” the atmosphere. Although we now know that such an outcome was physically impossible, it qualifies as an existential risk that was present at the time. For there to be a risk, given the knowledge and understanding available, it suffices that there is some subjective probability of an adverse outcome, even if it later turns out that objectively there was no chance of something bad happening. If we don’t know whether something is objectively risky or not, then it is risky in the subjective sense. The subjective sense is of course what we must base our decisions on.[2] At any given time we must use our best current subjective estimate of what the objective risk factors are.[3] A much greater existential risk emerged with the build-up of nuclear arsenals in the US and the USSR. An all-out nuclear war was a possibility with both a substantial probability and with consequences that might have been persistent enough to qualify as global and terminal. There was a real worry among those best acquainted with the information available at the time that a nuclear Armageddon would occur and that it might annihilate our species or permanently destroy human civilization.[4] Russia and the US retain large nuclear arsenals that could be used in a future confrontation, either accidentally or deliberately. There is also a risk that other states may one day build up large nuclear arsenals. Note however that a smaller nuclear exchange, between India and Pakistan for instance, is not an existential risk, since it would not destroy or thwart humankind’s potential permanently. Such a war might however be a local terminal risk for the cities most likely to be targeted. Unfortunately, we shall see that nuclear Armageddon and comet or asteroid strikes are mere preludes to the existential risks that we will encounter in the 21st century.

## Uniqueness

### Russia Overtaking US

#### Russia gaining influence in Latin America now

Ben-Ami 5/3

[Shlomo, a former Israeli foreign minister who now serves as Vice President of the Toledo International Center for Peace, “Is the US Losing Latin America?”, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-new-nature-of-us-influence-in-latin-america-by-shlomo-ben-ami>, PL]

MADRID – It is a mantra increasingly heard around the world: US power is in decline. And nowhere does this seem truer than in Latin America. No longer is the region regarded as America’s “backyard”; on the contrary, the continent has arguably never been so united and independent. But this view fails to capture the true nature of US influence in Latin America – and elsewhere as well. This illustration is by Paul Lachine and comes from <a href="http://www.newsart.com">NewsArt.com</a>, and is the property of the NewsArt organization and of its artist. Reproducing this image is a violation of copyright law. Illustration by Paul Lachine CommentsView/Create comment on this paragraphIt is true that US attention to Latin America has waned in recent years. President George W. Bush was more focused on his “global war on terror.” His successor, Barack Obama, seemed to give the region little thought as well, at least in his first term. CommentsView/Create comment on this paragraphIndeed, at the Summit of the Americas in Cartagena in April 2012, Latin American leaders felt sufficiently confident and united to challenge US priorities in the region. They urged the US to lift its embargo on Cuba, claiming that it had damaged relations with the rest of the continent, and to do more to combat drug use on its own turf, through education and social work, rather than supplying arms to fight the drug lords in Latin America – a battle that all acknowledged has been an utter failure. It is also true that Latin American countries have pursued a massive expansion of economic ties beyond America’s sway. China is now Latin America’s second-largest trading partner and rapidly closing the gap with the US. India is showing keen interest in the region’s energy industry, and has signed export agreements in the defense sector. Iran has strengthened its economic and military ties, especially in Venezuela. CommentsView/Create comment on this paragraphSimilarly, in 2008, Russia’s then-President Dmitri Medvedev identified the US war on terror as an opportunity to create strategic partnerships with rising powers such as Brazil, and with the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), a Venezuelan-inspired bloc opposed to US designs in the region. The energy giant Gazprom and the country’s military industries have spearheaded the Kremlin’s effort to demonstrate Russia’s ability to influence America’s neighborhood – a direct response to perceived American meddling in Russia’s own “near abroad,” particularly Georgia and Ukraine.

#### Russia overtaking US influence in Latin America

**Vakulenko 2012**

[Darya Vakulenko, Research Associate at Council on Hemispheric Affairs, “Economic Cold War: Russia And US Battle For Influence In Western Hemisphere – Analysis”, Eurasia Review, an independent Journal and Think Tank, 8/29/12, http://www.eurasiareview.com/29082012-economic-cold-war-russia-and-us-battle-for-influence-in-western-hemisphere-analysis//HZ]

The current economic competition between the Russian Federation and the United States in the Western Hemisphere bears striking similarity to the political antagonism prevalent during the Cold War. This deep seated rivalry still influences world affairs, as the United Nations Security Council cannot enact any major decision without an agreement between those two powers. However, a pragmatic view of the world economy plays a greater role now in the determination of Russia’s priorities and strategies as it begins to catch up with the U.S. in its exposure to Latin American economic interests.¶ As of late, the Russian Federation has gained economic ground over the United States in various parts of the Latin American region. For example, Washington’s embargo on Cuba gives Russia the opportunity to fill in the economic hollows left by the “imperialist neighbor.” While Washington engages in very limited trade with its ancient foe, Russia-Cuban links have been growing stronger with each passing year. Recently, the Russian oil company Zarubezhneft announced its plan to invest $100 million USD in Cuba by 2025. Considering that deposits of Cuban oil are estimated to reach 20 billion barrels, the Russians’ investment plan appears as if it will bring considerable profits in the near future to both sides.[1]¶ The recent activity in Ecuador presents another aspect of Russia’s growing economic attraction to Latin America. At the end of July 2012, the Ecuadorian government signed the “memorandum of understanding” with Gazprom, Russia’s largest oil and gas company. The memorandum will launch the exploration of the natural-gas field in the southern coastal areas of Ecuador.[2] This “Bolivarian country” (in reference to the state’s left-leaning state ideology) will gain ample royalties in conjunction with the development of its energy sector, while Russia will secure market access into Ecuador via their already impressive natural gas reserves. Notably, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa continues to advocate continental leadership independent of U.S. influence, thereby welcoming Russian influence.¶ Gazprom, together with another oil company, Rosneft, are clearly linked to Russian foreign policy. The Russian government owns 50.002 percent of shares in Gazprom and 75 percent in Rosneft thus President of Russia, Putin, oversees strategies of both companies.[3] Gazprom is the world’s largest producer of natural gas and the second largest producer of oil in the world with 9.7 million barrels per day, just behind Saudi Aramco. Rosneft is the world’s 15th largest oil and gas producer.[3] The wielding of such economic weight serves as a powerful foreign relations force as Russia looks to enter new global markets, firming up the already inextricable relationship between politics and economics.¶ The Cuban and Ecuadorian examples demonstrate how the United States’ continuing ideologically-based economic ties with Latin America could invite other large world players to represent investment portfolios to the region. The United States clearly does not take full advantage of its geographical proximity to Latin America, even as Russia pushes for greater markets throughout that region. At the time of the Cold War, bipolarity was intensified by a constant ideological race to include as many Third World countries under either Soviet Union or or the U.S. umbrella. Today the two compete over markets and trade partners throughout Latin America. In this battle Russia is clearly winning, because of its firm economic pragmatism.¶ One observes the phenomenon of increasing Russian influence in Latin America in the development a solid relationship between ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) and Moscow. Although Russia is not technically allied with ALBA—which is known for its left-wing ideology—Moscow is not wasting the opportunity to support anti-Western declarations espoused by the Bolivarian states. Former Russian President, Medvedev, has declared significant perspectives for cooperation, especially in economic development, highlighting the pragmatic nature that Russian economic policy has adopted over the last 20 years.[4]¶ Possible future nationalization of Russian assets by Latin American governments and political disagreements within the region have yet to deter Russia from vigorously embracing the emerging market. The Russian Federation has proven capable of negotiating with various leftist governments and has worked around the U.S. embargo against Cuba. The country appears to prioritize potential returns on its investments over ideology and public opinion by investing in controversial industries including arms and pipelines.¶ The economic potential of some countries could have a lasting impact on how we view the world politically. The words investment, profit and trade have been added to the everyday vocabulary of politicians. However, Russian politicians are ready to apply those words in Spanish more often than other counterparts.

### Russian Influence – Regional

#### Russia engaging Latin America – expanding economic and political ties

Nechepurenko 5-30

[Ivan, The Moscow Times, “Russia Seeks to Restore Influence in Latin America”, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-seeks-to-restore-influence-in-latin-america/480827.html>, PL]

Russia has demonstrated its increasing leverage in Latin America with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov meeting representatives of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in Moscow on Wednesday. The foreign ministers of Cuba, Costa Rica and Haiti and the deputy foreign minister of Chile discussed trade, political dialogue and a visa-free regime with Lavrov, with everyone in agreement that Russia's relations with the region are ripe enough to establish "a permanent mechanism for political dialogue and cooperation in a Russia-CELAC format," a statement from Russia's Foreign Ministry said. CELAC was founded in 2010 as a counterweight to the U.S.-led Organization of American States. It consists of 33 states representing almost 600 million people and producing 7 trillion dollars in annual GDP. "This is a serious attempt by Latin American states to counter U.S. economic and political influence in the region," said Mikhail Belyat, an independent Latin American expert and lecturer at the Russian State University for the Humanities. In the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, the Soviet Union rapidly increased its economic and military influence in Latin America only to see that influence subside with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Apart from Latin America, Russia has recently reinvigorated its efforts to project its influence around the world, especially in other areas where its influence has declined. To that end, Russia has been actively promoting the concept of a multi-polar world, playing an active role in such organizations as the BRICS and the Eurasian Economic Space, which is planned to be transformed into a full-fledged Eurasian Union in 2015. "Our friends have expressed their desire to make permanent contacts between the CELAC and BRICS. Particularly on the sidelines of various meetings. We believe this is a very attractive suggestion and we will definitely discuss it with other states that are members of this association," Lavrov said at the news conference that followed negotiations. BRICS consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, representing large, fast-growing economies with an increasing influence on global affairs. Just like BRICS, CELAC countries have enjoyed strong economic growth of 4.5 percent on average over the last three years, which in turn drives these states to look to distant markets. "Like Russia, these countries want to diversify their economies and export markets so that their goals complement each other," Belyat said. Trade between Russia and Latin America reached 16 billion dollars in 2012 alone. In order to complement the exchange of goods with the exchange of people, the sides have agreed to put their efforts into establishing a visa-free regime between CELAC countries and Russia. Although Russians already enjoy visa-free travel to most countries of Latin America, including Brazil, Argentina and Chile, Costa Rica and Panama still require Russian citizens to apply for entry clearance in advance. Russia has been negotiating visa-free entry for its citizens for some time now, with the most well-known process taking place with the EU. Russia has noted that the EU already grants visa-free access to such countries as Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela - countries which enjoy a similar level of economic prosperity as Russia. As the bureaucratic process in the EU drags out visa-free negotiations, Moscow is looking to other regions to expand its influence. "We used to have hectares full of Lada cars along the Panama Canal, while our tractors were plowing Mexican lands," Belyat said. "So I predict Russia will become more prominent in Latin America, and we will see more Latin American goods in our stores."

### Russian Influence – Cuba

#### **Russia-Cuba ties high – history and economic cooperation**

**Ningzhu 2013**

[Zhu. Associate Professor of Finance Graduate School of Management University of California¶ "Cuban Parliament Leader Says Ties with Russia under Full Expansion." - Xinhua. Xinhua, 18 Mar. 2013. Web. 08 July 2013.MA]

The relations between Cuba and Russia are under full expansion, Esteban Lazo, president of Cuban parliament, said on Friday.¶ Lazo made the remarks after signing an agreement with the visiting leader of Russian Senate, Valentina Matviyenko, to boost the parliamentary cooperation between the two countries.¶ The delegation of the Russian Senate arrived Thursday in Havana, headed by Matviyenko.¶ Lazo said the visit would boost the "excellent" historical ties between both the governments and the peoples.¶ He also called on Russia to increase the investments to the island country.¶ Lazo stressed the importance of the current Russian investments in Cuba's oil sector and expressed the interest of the Cuban government in extending the cooperation to other areas, such as nickel production, tourism and agriculture.¶ Cuba is not only a strategic partner for Russia, but also a friend for whom the Russian feel special affection, due to historical connections, Matviyenko said.¶ Havana and Moscow were close allies during the Cold War era, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the relations cooled off. Since 2005, the bilateral relations have began to improve with the resumption of mutual high-level visits.¶ Currently, Russia is Cuba's ninth largest trade partner, with a trade volume of 224 million U.S. dollars in 2011, according to official figures.

#### Russia engaging Cuba – no cultural obstacles

**Xinhua 2013**

[Chinese News network "Russian PM Says Ties with Cuba on Upward Path." |Americas|chinadaily.com.cn. Xinhua, 23 Feb. 2013. Web. 08 July 2013.MA]

The ties with Cuba are historical, solid, strategic, and are on an upward path, official news agency Prensa Latina (PL) quoted the Russian prime minister as saying.¶ Medvedev stressed that there were no obstacles in enhancing cooperation ties with Cuba in the areas including economy, humanitarian affairs and government decisions.¶ The Russian prime minister highlighted that his country and the island country had wide prospects for developing and increasing the links in the sectors of energy, industry, high technology, medicine as well as cosmos.¶ He said the trade between Moscow and Havana was standing at about $214 million in 2012which was not enough, and should be increased in coming years.¶ Also on Friday, Medvedev laid a wreath at the Mausoleum of the Soviet Internationalist Soldier where the remains of 67 Soviet soldiers were held in memory of their sacrifice in the Missile Crisis in October 1962.¶ The Russian prime minister arrived in Cuba Thursday afternoon for an official visit from Brazil. This is Medvedev's second trip to Cuba. He visited the island country as head of state in 2008.¶

### Russian Influence – Mexico

#### Russia and Mexico building bilateral relations now

The News 2013

[Comprehensive news reporting agency dealing specifically with Mexico, “Mexico reaches out to Russia, Denmark”, <http://thenews.com.mx/index.php/home-articulos/9371-mexico-reaches-out-to-russia-denmark>, May 13, 2013, NK]

Mexico City – In separate meetings on Sunday, leading Mexican officials looked to strengthen ties with Russia and Denmark on economic and environmental issues, respectively.¶ At a bilateral meeting between Russia and Mexico in St. Petersburg yesterday, Foreign Relations (SRE) Undersecretary Carlos de Icaza talked with his Russian counterpart, Sergei A. Ryabkov, about the need to build a strategic relationship between the two nations.¶ In an effort to improve trade ties, the officials discussed Russia’s recent ban of imported Mexican meat and anti-dumping measures that Mexico imposed on Russian steel.¶ Both Icaza and Ryabkov promised to help modify current law on the use of nuclear energy, shipping and extradition.¶ The two nations also discussed the Middle East, focusing on Syria and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¶ In Mexico City on Sunday, Environment Secretary Juan José Guerra Abud sat down with Denmark’s Foreign Affairs Minister Villy Sovndal to discuss a €5 million ($6.49 million) investment in climate change prevention and clean energy in Mexico.¶ Guerra Abud thanked the Danish government for their help in tackling climate change and said that the investment would be spread over three years. Sovndal said that he was keen to explore bilateral relations between cities in both countries and to share ideas on sustainable water use and waste management.¶ He also invited Guerra Abud to take part in the first Regional Forum on Green Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will take place in Bogotá, Colombia in June.

#### Russia-Mexico engagement now – trade, energy

Diplonews 2013

[Diplonews: the website where the whole information published originated from Official Institutions like Governments, Ministries, Embassies and States. Diplonews: “Mexican MFA holds a seminar on opportunities in the Mexico-Russia relationship”, <http://www.diplonews.com/feeds/free/14_January_2013_153.php>, KK]

**The Directorate General of** International Cooperation and Economic Development of the Mexican Agency for International Development (**AMEXCID**) **organized a seminar on "Opportunities in the Mexico-Russia Relationship."** The event was chaired by Mexico’s new ambassador in Russia, Ruben Beltran. Representatives from various Mexican companies interested in doing business with Russia, from the Mexican Business Council for Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology (COMCE) and ProMéxico attended. **In the last three years, the economic relationship between Mexico and Russia has expanded significantly in the areas of tourism, trade and investment. Particularly, over the last two years, bilateral trade increased by 219 percent. Russian tourism to Mexico has increased from 27,000 in 2010 to 42,000 in 2011 and nearly 45,000 in the first half of 2012.** This increase has been made possible in part by the establishment of several direct flights between the two countries. **This dynamism can also be seen in exports such as food and beverages, pharmaceuticals and auto parts.** As a result of these trends, **Russia has become the third largest export market** for Mexican meat. **The private sector representatives at the seminar stressed the great potential of the two emerging economies**, especially **in strategic sectors such as the energy**, automotive, food and high value-added industries. There was a fruitful exchange of experiences on best practices to drive business with Russia. This seminar arises from the instructions of **President Enrique Peña Nieto** that foreign policy must contribute to Mexico’s goals in the five strategic areas he **has outlined**, including **promoting development through trade, reciprocal investment and cooperation with priority countries**, as well as ensuring that Mexico acts with global responsibility. Seminars such as this one will serve the new Mexican ambassadors as guides for bilateral promotion and for helping the Mexican business sector to better penetrate the global market. Alejandro Hinojoso, Executive Director of International Promotion at Promexico, also participated in the seminar.

### Russian Influence – Venezuela

#### Venezuela- Russian cooperation high post-Chavez – Maduro engagement proves

Pearson 7/2

[Tamara, “Venezuela’s Maduro Attends Gas Exporting Countries Forum, Signs Agreements with Russia” Tamara Pearson, July 2, 2013, venezuelanalysis.com, CP]

While in Russia Maduro also met with Putin in order to ratify the continuity of their countries’ strategic alliances. The two countries currently cooperate in the areas of energy, defence, agriculture, housing and technology.¶ “Russia can count on the homeland of Simon Bolivar...we have come to ratify our desire to strengthen this strategic alliance and the close relationship of cooperation between both nations,” Maduro told press after the meeting.¶ Putin expressed similar sentiments and announced that an important street in Moscow will be named after the late Hugo Chavez “so that he remains in the Russian people's memory”.¶ The street was inaugurated today with a ceremony attended by Maduro and the head of Russia’s state owned company, Rosneft, Igor Sechin. It is located in the north east of Moscow, is 170 metres long, and surrounded by parks and a small square.¶ In further comments on the meeting with Putin, Maduro said, “We’ve held an extensive work meeting with President Putin... we want to continue to tighten the relationship between both countries... Russia and Venezuela are progressing in the energy, petroleum, and gas sectors, as well as with military cooperation and the development of a relationship in the financial, education, and cultural sectors”.¶ The two countries signed five new agreements, for a total of 240 ongoing agreements, which fall into 14 strategic areas. One new agreement involves creating a joint venture for natural gas production between Venezuela’s PDVSA and Rosneft. The two presidents also discussed opening up a direct flight between Moscow and Caracas, in order to facilitate tourism and trade.

#### Energy cooperation growing - oil

Mainwaring 7/3

[Jon, award-winning editor who has covered the technology, engineering and energy sectors since the mid-1990s, “Russia, Venezuela Sign Energy Agreements,” Rigzone, July 3, 2013, <http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/127487/Russia_Venezuela_Sign_Energy_Agreements>, CP]

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced in Moscow late Tuesday that Russian investment in Venezuela had reached $21 billion as the countries signed new cooperation agreements, including an offshore deal involving Rosneft and Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA.¶ Leading a Venezuelan government delegation to Moscow, President Nicolás Maduro signed five agreements covering cooperation in several energy-related areas, including oil and gas, electrical generation and financing.¶ "During the last 14 years, both countries have built a roadmap for cooperation in energy matters," Maduro said.¶ Maduro also noted that Russian-Venezuelan joint ventures in Venezuela had led to the production of 206,000 barrels per day, while the goal remains to raise this to a million barrels per day within four years.¶ Meanwhile, as part of the bilateral agreement between the two countries, Russia's Rosneft announced Wednesday that it has signed a cooperation agreement with Petróleos de Venezuela. The deal, which was signed between Rosneft President Igor Sechin and Venezuelan Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez, will see Rosneft and PDVSA cooperate on offshore projects in Venezuela.¶ In particular, the agreement covers joint studies for the technical and economic viability of offshore gas and condensate production in Venezuela, gas liquefaction for export and domestic sales and the evaluation of prospects for joint ventures for the development of gas and gas condensate fields.¶

#### Influence high – energy and arms sales

Rianovosti 3/7

[RIANOVOSTI – Russian Newspaper, 3/7/2013, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130307/179878459.html>, ZS]

“As for our future relations with Venezuela, they will depend primarily on the Venezuelan people, the future president and the country’s leadership,” Putin told reporters during a visit to the Russian city of Vologda.¶ “We are counting on continuity [in Russian-Venezuelan relations]” Putin said.¶ Ties between Russia and Venezuela flourished under Chavez, whose 14-year rule earned Moscow a number of lucrative arms and energy deals and a close ally in South America.¶ The Russian president again praised Chavez’s legacy, calling him a bright leader with a strong political will who always prioritized the interests of the Venezuelan people.¶ “We have established a good-natured, warm, friendly relationship, which, undoubtedly, helped to build relations between our countries,” Putin said. “Hugo Chavez was a dear friend of Russia.”¶ Chavez, who was known as the most vocal adversary of the United States in Latin America, won a new six-year term in an election in October, and his inauguration was slated for January 11, but he was unable to attend due to health reasons.¶ Chavez named Vice President Nicolas Maduro as his potential successor before undergoing the latest surgery in December.

### US Influence Declining

#### US continuing to lose influence in Latin America

Hakim 2013

[Peter, president emeritus and senior fellow of the Inter-American Dialogue, March 27, 2013, “Post Chavez: Can U.S. rebuild Latin American ties?”, http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2013/03/27/post-chavez-can-u-s-rebuild-latin-american-ties/]

The funeral of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez earlier this month was a massive celebration of a vitriolic foe of the United States. This tribute should make Washington take a fresh look not only at its relations with Venezuela but also with all of Latin America. Virtually every Latin American country sent a high-level delegation to show its esteem for Chavez, who, during his 14 years in office, regularly vilified the United States, disparaged its leaders and campaigned tirelessly to end the U.S. role in the region. The presidents of Latin America’s six largest nations — including the closest U.S. regional allies, Mexico, Colombia and Chile — traveled to Caracas for the burial ceremonies. Never in Latin America, as many commentators noted, has a deceased leader been given a grander memorial — not even Argentina’s adored Juan Domingo Peron back in 1974. This extraordinary acclaim for Washington’s most virulent adversary in the Americas was probably not intended as a deliberate snub. There were other reasons that so many of Washington’s friends ended up applauding a committed antagonist of the United States. Some leaders, concerned with politics back home, were seeking to appeal to constituencies on the left, who idolized Chavez. Some who have benefited from the financial largesse distributed by the president of oil rich-Venezuela are eager for his successor to continue that support. Still others were reluctant to stand apart or isolate themselves from their neighbors — so they became part of the crowd. Yet the fanfare accompanying Chavez’s funeral suggests a troubling degree of indifference to the United States in Latin America — as if Washington no longer counted.

#### US control of Latin America slipping – countries are looking elsewhere

Ellis 2011

[Evan, assistant professor with the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS). His research focus is on Latin America’s relationship with external actors, including China, Russia, and Iran, “Emerging Multi-Power Competitions in Latin America”, http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2011/2011-1/2011\_1\_03\_ellis\_eng\_s.pdf]

The competition between external actors in Latin America is a concept relatively removed from the traditional US way of looking at the region, and at geopolitics in general. While the primarily economic nature of that conflict may appear reassuring, the erosion of the US commercial presence in Latin America will also undermine its ability to shape political and economic developments in the region. Although the US will remain equally tied to Latin America in geographic and human terms, its ability to shape outcomes unilaterally continues to decline, implying that the US must increasingly learn to work with partners, both within the region, and external to it. In this brave new world, Latin America will continue to develop a less US-centric image of the world, while the US will learn to develop new ways of being a partner, helping Latin America to make the most of what its other global relationships have to offer.

### Russian Oil - Cuba

#### Russia ramping up development – cuba key

Industry Press 2013

[“Will Russia Find Cuban oil?” http://industryruss.wordpress.com/2013/03/05/will-russia-find-cuban-oil/]

Many became highly concerned last week, when it was said that Russia was forgiving Cuba nearly $30 billion of debt. Journalists speculated that Russia had thus received access to the Cuban shelf which is quite promising, with a large resource base, but it has not been developed, so the work on the Cuban shelf bears certain risks for both Russian and other companies. Nevertheless it is beneficial for Russia to participate in the development of the Cuban shelf not just to increase oil production and sales, but also to receive additional technologies and experience on the shelf.¶ Assumptions of large reserves of black gold on the north coast of Cuba first appeared in 2008. Several companies started to explore the Cuban shelf: Venezuela’s PdVSA, Petronas of Malaysia, the Spanish Repsol, and the Russian Zarubezhneft. However, the results were bleak. Oil was not found, but Russia believed that it was early to give up.

### Russian Oil – Cuba – A2 Ending Oil Drilling

#### Oil drilling is only suspended – will return to Cuba in 2014

MaXi & Chun 5/31

[MaXi, Yao Chun- editors Chinese People Daily, May 31, 2013, “Russia suspends oil exploration in Cuba”, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/8265978.html>, TB]

Russian state oil company Zarubezhneft ceased its oil exploration work in deep waters off northern Cuba, due to geological and technical reasons, but pledged to return to the same area in 2014, the company said here Thursday.¶ Zarubezhneft and its Cuban counterpart Cubapetroleos (CUPET) decided to change their initial drilling program by dividing it into two stages, with the second stage to be launched in 2014, the company said.¶ Zarubezhneft said it faced an extremely hard rocky surface and technical problems with the semi-submersible oil rig Songa Mercur during the drilling.¶ However, the Russian company's announcement of stopping drilling in Cuba's Exclusive Economic Zone was not unexpected, as Songa Offshore, owner of the platform, had officially announced it would suspend its work here on June 1 and move the platform to Southeast Asia.¶ Zarubezhneft was granted in 2009 the rights to explore the L-01X block, located in the Old Bahamas Channel, north of the Sabana-Camaguey Archipelago, bordering the coasts of Cuba's centralprovinces Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus and Ciego de Avila.¶ According to studies by the U.S. Geological Service, the underwater reserve located next to the Bahamas Channel, is estimated to have 1.906 billion barrels of oil.

## Links

### Latin America Influence

#### Russia engaging Latin America – used as leverage for international credibility

Ellis 2011

[Evan, assistant professor with the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS). His research focus is on Latin America’s relationship with external actors, including China, Russia, and Iran, “Emerging Multi-Power Competitions in Latin America”, http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2011/2011-1/2011\_1\_03\_ellis\_eng\_s.pdf]

Coinciding Cleavages on Geopolitical Issues. Traditional geopolitical issues will still tend to divide external actors in Latin America into two camps, although the lineup of actors will change according to the issue. On issues of democratization and human rights, the US and Europe are likely to be generally aligned in advancing an agenda that respects traditional Western norms, while Iran and the PRC, and often Russia, will emphasize the right of each state in the region to determine its own internal politics. India, depending on the specific issue, may or may not press for respect for such norms. Within this broad alignment, of course, differences will still exist, with Europe emphasizing human rights issues in select countries, such as Colombia, where the US does not, or overlooking human rights issues in others, such as Cuba, where the US places emphasis. The pursuit of commercial goals by some actors may motivate them to avoid positions on geopolitical issues that would separate them from potential business partners. The second major cleavage dividing external actors in Latin America is the question of the developed world (North) versus the developing world (South). Particularly with left-of-center regimes in Latin America, countries such as China, India and Iran emphasize their common “South-South” ties as countries in development, generally in political meetings indirectly pursuing commercial deals for their companies. Russia often fits uneasily into this coalition, seeking to define itself, in its relations with populist countries such as Venezuela, as an up and coming power (eg. Part of the “BRIC” nations), or as alternative to the status quo powers (the US and Europe), even though it has not been traditionally categorized as a “developing” nation. Within the political space created by such coinciding cleavages, Latin America also serves as a target for important, but differing internal and international agendas pursued by each actor. For the PRC, Latin America’s principal tie to domestic politics is Taiwan. 12 of the 23 nations in the world which continue to recognize the Republic of China (ROC) as the legitimate Chinese government are found in Latin America. Externally, the PRC also seeks to participate in the region’s institutions, such as the IADB and OAS, and prevent another power such as the US from dominating those institutions, or other regional structures, in such a way that could shut it out of the region and jeopardize its strategic commercial goals. None of other external actors in the region explicitly oppose these goals, but rather, each pursues its own goals in parallel. This include Iran, for which support from Latin America reinforces the international stature of its leadership in the Iranian regime’s messianic efforts to advance its brand of radical Islam with Iran at its center. In a more pragmatic sense, Latin American ties, including financial institutions such as the International Development Bank in Venezuela, direct airline flights, factories in remote areas, and technology collaboration, help Iran to circumvent international sanctions to develop a nuclear capabilities, and possibly fund and create a logistics base for terrorist operations that could reach the United States, in the event that Iran wishes to wage such a conflict in the future. For Russia, in a manner similar to Iran, Latin American ties help the current regime to demonstrate to a domestic audience that Russia is once again playing a significant international role, harkening back to its height of Cold War power as the heart of the Soviet Union. Latin America also provides the platform for Russia to generate counter-pressures to US activities in Eastern Europe, the Caspian sea, and Central Asia, which Russia regards as its sphere of influence, such as November 2008, when Russia sent supersonic Tu-160 bombers and a squadron of ships to Venezuela for maneuvers in the Caribbean, as a counterpoint to the US projection of power in the Black Sea during the succession crisis in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

#### **Russian influence in Latin America key to Russian diplomatic credibility**

**Fillingham 2010**

[Zachary."Russia Eyes Latin America."Geopolitical Monitor.N.p., 05 Apr. 2010. Web.¶ Director, Publications Zachary holds a BA in International Relations from York University, MA]

Russia is poised to occupy the diplomatic space created in Latin America by [American decline](http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/american-decline-1/). Broadly speaking, there are two factors that are currently harming American interests in Latin America. The first is the burden of history insofar that several governments view relations with the United States through the lens of Washington’s pseudo-colonial past. The second is [American decline](http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/american-decline-1/), or in other words, a new reality in global politics that casts the United States as one important player among several others. It follows that Latin American states now enjoy a greater degree of choice in international economic, political, and military engagements. In many ways, Russia is a natural winner here, for its’ capital, energy reserves, international influence, and military technology represent an appealing alternative to feeding the politically unpopular perception of American dominance in the region. Such was the dynamic at work during Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s recent visit to Venezuela. The visit resulted in the announcement of a $1 billion USD deal for a consortium of Russian energy companies to develop the Hunin-6 oil field; a reserve that could end up producing up to 450,000 barrels a day by 2017. Venezuela needs technology-intensive capital to develop its vast energy reserves and is politically averse to dealing with Washington. Consequently, Russia is able to step in as a natural partner. The same is true in the area of [defense spending](http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/mps-claim-uk-defense-spending-on-falklands-50-down-in-six-years-1/), as the Putin-Chavez summit also produced new military deals that could ultimately amount to anywhere from $2-$5 billion USD. Moscow has pledged to provide Venezuela with a variety of military hardware, including: T-72 tanks, Smerch rocket launchers, and other unspecified platforms. Bolivian President Evo Morales also benefited from Vladimir Putin’s Latin American visit to the tune of $100 million USD worth of loans to buy Russian helicopters. The political symbolism that underpins Russian re-engagement with Latin America cannot be understated. From the Rio Group’s announcement of the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELC)- a regional forum that excludes the United States- to Brazil’s more recent slapping of sanctions on a variety of American trade goods, there is no shortage of evidence to show that Latin American states are committed to moving out of the shadow of their powerful neighbor to the north. Given the trend of Latin American assertiveness of late, we may see another big announcement coming down during the [BRIC countries](http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/bric-countries-energy-security-report-1/) summit in Brazil in mid-April. This issue carries symbolic weight on the Russian side as well. Re-engagement with Latin America offers Moscow an opportunity to reclaim some of the international prestige that vanished during the demise of the Soviet Union. To once again penetrate a region that carried so much weight during the Cold War caters to Russian nationalist sentiments, which just so happens to be a central pillar of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s political fortunes. That Putin did not cancel his scheduled trip to Venezuela after last week’s Moscow bombings is indicative of the importance that is currently being placed on engagement with Latin America. Given the mutual benefits, symbolic potency, and the diplomatic space afforded by [American decline](http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/american-decline-1/), we should expect Russia to continue to deepen relations with Latin American states, much to the displeasure of the Obama administration. Bolivian President Morales’ calls for Russia to “return to Latin America” will likely go down in history as prophetic, because that is exactly what’s going to happen.

#### Russian engagement in Latin America is targeted at countering US influence

Blank 2009

[Stephen, Professor of Russian National Security Studies at the

Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College in Pennsylvania, “Russia in Latin America: Geopolitical Games in the US's Neighborhood”, www.ifri.org/downloads/ifriblankrussiaandlatinamericaengapril09.pdf‎]

Nonetheless, Russia does have genuine interests in Latin America. Those interests are commercial and political: the former being a means to secure the latter. In regard to Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua those interests are more strategic and overtly aimed at countering US influence in Latin America. Whether visiting the region or hosting Latin American officials in Moscow, Russian officials take every opportunity to make rhetorical declarations on a congruence or identity of interests with their interlocutors on current issues in world politics, including construction of a multipolar world order.45 In all cases discussion revolves around the following issues: trade, mainly in commodities but in high-tech and industrial products where possible; energy, whereby Russia either invests in the other state’s energy firms or explores for resources there; attempts to gain leverage for each sides’ investment in the other’s country; Russian offers of arms sales and space launch services (particularly to Brazil and Venezuela). Russia’s anti-American campaign appeared to conform with Latin American interests, as a result of the turn to leftism in several Latin American states beginning around 2006, combined with growing awareness of China’s penetration of the region and Latin American economic opportunities.46 Latin American economic integration through MERCOSUR allegedly appeals to Russia, but mainly because it implies support for a multipolar world.47 This dichotomy between a professed economic agenda with serious efforts to sign deals with Latin American states and the increasingly transparent strategic objectives was equally visible during Medvedev’s 2008 trip. Medvedev’s private talks appear to have emphasized trade opportunities, but his public rhetoric expressed hopes for Latin American support for a multipolar world.48 To support this economic and strategic agenda Moscow has made extensive economic overtures to Latin American governments. Russia has offered them all deals with respect to oil, gas, nuclear energy, uranium mining, electricity generation, weapons sales, high-tech defense technology, agriculture and cooperation with regard to space. The geographical scope of these offers covers the whole Latin American world from Mexico, Cuba, and Trinidad in the Caribbean to Argentina and Chile in the South although the mixture of goods and services under consideration naturally varies from state to state. Nonetheless certain patterns are clear. For example, Russia fully understands Brazil’s importance as South America’s largest economy and a regional power and seeks much closer economic ties with it. Since at least 2006, Moscow has been pursuing what it calls a “technological alliance” with Brazil, allegedly because together they can initiate worldclass technological projects.49 Similarly Russia wants to take part in a projected gas pipeline from Argentina to Bolivia, as well as key energy projects with Venezuela.50 An important reason why Moscow included countries like Brazil and Peru was to allow Russia to expand its “commercial beachhead” in South America beyond traditionally anti- American governments and compete more vigorously with the United States both commercially and politically.51 Similar thinking exists regarding arms sales. For years Russian weapons exporters have seen Latin America as a potential market for their wares, at first through the modernization of existing weapons but moving more recently to offering new products to all governments.52 Indeed, these exporters publicly claimed that the Bush Administration’s policies had been a gift to Russian arms manufacturers. Potential customers became alarmed that their own position had become precarious therefore they sought increasing numbers of modern weapons.53 Of course, Latin American countries also benefit. Not only do they gain exposure to a large and growing market—at least before the economic crisis, a market which may return after it ends—they also achieve their own economic and geostrategic aims. For example, by turning to Russia to conduct hydrocarbon exploration on its territory, Argentina reportedly wishes to escape from excessive reliance upon Venezuela for energy and financial aid. LUKOIL may provide fuel oil and diesel fuel for thermal power plants in the winter when there tend to be gas shortages, Russia will also help construct the Northeast pipeline to Bolivia.54 However, the expanding economic ties should not disguise Moscow’s fundamentally geostrategic concerns. Thus Medvedev wants the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) to collaborate on policies to promote multipolarity.55 He and Argentinean President Cristina Kirchner called for the reform of international financial institutions, one of Russia’s major foreign policy aims recently and Medvedev urged Argentina to recognize Russia as a market economy.56 Russian officials, including the president, have also urged Brazil to coordinate foreign policy with Russia to foster the multipolar world.57 Comments highlighting an identity of views on key elements of this vaunted multipolarity routinely appear in joint communiqués of Foreign Ministers and Presidents.58 Indeed, in 2006 Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov openly admitted that successful business contacts are crucial to Russia’s geopolitical cooperation with other governments, saying: “I would not set higher targets for geopolitical relations without making a success in the economy first.”59 Similarly Medvedev conceded that his trip to Latin America was motivated by serious geopolitical reasons.60

#### Russia is taking advantage of US ignorance of Latin America – expanding influence

Blank 2009

[Stephen, Professor of Russian National Security Studies at the

Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College in Pennsylvania, “Russia in Latin America: Geopolitical Games in the US's Neighborhood”, www.ifri.org/downloads/ifriblankrussiaandlatinamericaengapril09.pdf‎]

In analyzing the nature of Russia’s relations with Latin America, a few conclusions can be drawn. First, Moscow’s main motives in Latin America are clearly geopolitical and tied to its self-presentation as a global superpower and rival of the US. Second, its capabilities for achieving decisive strategic influence are limited to a few struggling, leftist Latin American states. Third, the current economic crisis has constricted those capabilities still further. Fourth, most Latin American states will not follow Russian policies against their own interests simply to improve trade or let Russia hijack them for its purposes—unless the Obama Administration utterly neglects or disregards them, which is unlikely. Even Russian commentators and some military officers recognize and publicly admit that the posturing seen in exercises in Venezuela and the Caribbean is just that, a display with little or no strategic benefit.88 The only way in which Russian policy truly threatens the US and Latin America is its military and intelligence support for Chavez and similar leaders. This support is passed on to insurgents and narco-trafficantes in order to destabilize pro-American regimes while strengthening Chavez and his allies. Adequate responses to such threats are inherently economic and political, and only military as a last resort. Washington can do much to facilitate security in Latin America: regenerating its own economy; simultaneously opening up trade markets and eliminating barriers to Latin American exports; enhancing multilateralism and interoperability among defense forces as requested by Latin American militaries; and beginning the normalization of Cuba. Havana is no longer the threat it was, Venezuela has claimed that dubious honor. Rehabilitating Cuba, given that Castro’s days are clearly numbered, would take the air out of Chavez’s balloon; it is quite clear that Havana would probably welcome a path towards better relations with the US, especially the economic benefits they would inevitably bring. A policy with a more symbolically important impact upon Latin America is currently difficult to imagine. Nonetheless, there should be no illusion that the security problems that plague this region are easily overcome, quite the opposite. But that is all the more reason why the US cannot ignore the area and let it drift to Moscow, Tehran, and Beijing for want of a better alternative. That outcome would only confirm once again that in world politics, there is no such thing as benign neglect. Instead neglect is malign and engenders negative results for the negligent state along with those neglected. The policies of the Bush administration allowed Russia to gain a foothold in Latin American politics, a result of Washington’s negligence; under President Obama, the US should reverse those outcomes and demonstrate what liberal democracy in action can truly accomplish.

#### Russia is trying to engage in Latin America to regain international influence

**Gee 2008**

[Alastair Gee, writer for U.S. News & World Report, “How Russia Is Trying to Regain Influence in Latin America”, U.S. News & World Report, an American news magazine published from Washington, D.C., 10/14/08, http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2008/10/14/how-russia-is-trying-to-regain-influence-in-latin-america //HZ]

MOSCOW—Somewhere in the North Atlantic, a squadron of Russian warships is steering toward the Caribbean. Led by the nuclear-powered missile cruiser Peter the Great, the ships are on their way to joint naval exercises with Venezuela. U.S. officials say they'll be watching when the vessels finally arrive in a few weeks.¶ Russia has beefed up its presence in Latin America in recent months, inking military and business deals amid a drive to reassert its status as a major world power. "Russia is adopting the course that any superpower should have," says Boris Martynov, deputy director of Moscow's Institute of Latin America.¶ Latin America seems an obvious partner. Russia's relations with the West are strained following the Georgia conflict, while some left-leaning governments in the region, such as Venezuela and Bolivia, are looking for allies after clashing with the United States.¶ But it's up for debate what Russia truly wants in the region and whether it has the capacity to become a major player there.¶ This is not the first time Russians have sought close links with Latin America. In 1962, the stationing of Soviet missiles in Cuba nearly precipitated nuclear war with the United States. The Soviets also funded regional communist parties and invited students from the region to study in Soviet universities. But after the 1991 Soviet collapse, Russia broke off most of its ties.¶ The recent developments are one more sign of its oil-fueled resurgence, which has only recently been slowed by the global credit crunch.¶ The upcoming naval exercises will be the first time since the end of the Cold War that Russia has had a major military presence in the Caribbean. They follow a training visit to Venezuela by two Russian bombers in September. Russia will also provide Venezuela with a $1 billion military loan, and President Hugo Chávez, who has visited Russia twice since June, has said Russian and Venezuelan oil and gas producers will form a global energy "colossus."¶ Meanwhile, a top Russian minister close to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Igor Sechin, traveled to Latin America to bolster links with Cuba, where Russia has said it will build a space center, and Nicaragua. Nicaragua is the only country apart from Russia to have recognized the independence from Georgia of the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.¶ In the energy sphere, state-owned gas firm Gazprom announced in September that it plans to invest $4.5 billion in a Bolivian natural gas project along with French firm Total. It also intends to participate in the Venezuelan and Brazilian sections of a pipeline that will cross the South American continent.¶ Still, it's not yet clear whether Russia's involvement in Latin America is more about furthering its own global ambitions or about sending a message to the United States, which Russia considers to have interfered in its sphere of interest during the August conflict with Georgia.¶ Russia is partly motivated by a desire to regain the global influence it lost after the Soviet collapse. In this vein, it has also been fostering ties with Iran, resumed the long-range air patrols over the Pacific and Atlantic oceans that ended with the Soviet Union, and even dispatched a warship to Somalia after a Ukrainian boat carrying 33 tanks was seized by pirates there in September.¶ Links with Latin America may also help further Russia's aim of becoming a counterweight to the United States on the international stage. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin have criticized the United States for causing the financial crisis and fostering global instability, particularly as a result of the Iraq war. Additional sore points are U.S. involvement in the Georgia conflict and the missile defense system it plans for eastern Europe.¶ And, like the United States and China, Russia hopes to benefit from Latin America's raw materials and energy deposits.¶ All of this plays into the hands of the left-leaning Latin American nations that are looking to pull out of the United States' orbit. U.S.-Venezuelan tensions have ratcheted up since Chávez came to power, and in September, Bolivia expelled the U.S. ambassador after accusing the United States of fomenting unrest in the country.¶ Even among friendlier nations, the United States has lost much of its influence, says Peter Hakim, head of the Inter-American Dialogue, a think tank in Washington that specializes in the Americas. "The financial turmoil greatly reduces our credibility. Economic management was the area that Latin American most looked to us: They wanted U.S. trade; they wanted U.S. investment."¶ This could be good for Russia—assuming it continues to seek close ties with the region. But Russia may simply be looking to Latin America now to make a point about Georgia, says Gregory Weeks, a Latin America expert at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. "It's a signal to the United States about U.S. involvement in what Russia considers its own sphere of influence," he says. "I don't see this as something that Russia intends to continue with or expand. Rather, they're saying to us, 'You've been pushing us too far, and we can push back.' "¶ At any rate, it may be premature to worry about Russian domination of the region, considering the long-established influence of countries like the United States and China. China is Brazil's third-largest trading partner after the United States and Argentina, and Brazil exported $11 billion of goods there last year. "The Chinese engagement in Latin America is clearly going to be with us for a long time," says Hakim. "It's not clear to me what Russia's interest is."¶ And Russia has been hit hard by the credit crunch—its two main stock exchanges, the Micex and the RTS Index, plunged around 70 percent between May and October. So, for now, global expansion may take second place to resolving the financial crisis.

### Arms Sales

#### Russia influence expanding – weapons sales

Deryabina 2012

[Darya, “Latin America prepared for US financial bubble to burst”, http://english.pravda.ru/business/finance/29-02-2012/120640-latin\_america-0/]

Peru, Chile and Mexico are members of APEC, and Brazil is part of BRICS conglomerate. The insistence with which the Russians and Latinos overcome the difficulties and hardships should cause blatant jealousy of the West, where the population even in the "light savings" mode takes to the streets with protests. But why Russia that also has a large economic weight in the above-mentioned organizations have increasingly moved away from Latin American markets? What are the prospects for cooperation between Russia and the continent of South America at the time when Europe and the United States are in deep crisis? How utopian is the concept of multilateralism based on spatial-territorial proximity? Writer Vladislav Savin suggested the concept of "friendship through a neighbor," and there is certain logic to it. Latin America and Russia never had a common border and, consequently, territorial conflict. This is not to the liking of the United States used to leading the movement against a "common enemy". So far the hegemony is supported by the economic indicators, as well as a number of formally independent organizations - NATO, WTO, World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Here Moscow should try and prepare in advance to enter the region with a competitive advantage when the U.S. financial bubble finally bursts. On the one hand, the current numbers of the economic relations between Russia and Latin America have surpassed the numbers of the Soviet times, when Russia and the South American continent were mainly connected by virtue of ideological and political and military-strategic reasons. On the other hand, the inertia of the Russian business is a major barrier to unification. Even large corporations like the "Gazprom", LUKOIL, "Aluminum" and "Power Machines" only began to move from talking to specific commercial projects. If the current trends continue, the trade turnover between the countries of Latin America and Russia by 2017 could exceed $20 billion. It may be higher if Russia manages to keep this area as a major market for weapons after the Middle East currently engulfed in revolutions. The policy of "loose hands" may bring out other types of cooperation, such as the use of the equatorial launch site "Alcantara" in Brazil. The main thing is to be able to bring the relationship to the level of strategic partnership. To do this, both diplomacy and business will have to assess the interests of exporters and investors from other countries that are now firmly seated on the South American continent.

#### Russia leads regional arms sales now

Ellis 2011

[Evan, assistant professor with the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS). His research focus is on Latin America’s relationship with external actors, including China, Russia, and Iran, “Emerging Multi-Power Competitions in Latin America”, http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2011/2011-1/2011\_1\_03\_ellis\_eng\_s.pdf]

Military Goods. As Russia has sought to return to Latin America, sales of military hardware has been one of its most effective leverage points. Its leading client in the region has been Venezuela, selling with $9.4 billion in sales and credits to the Chavez regime since 2004, including rifles, helicopters, fighter aircraft, tanks, personnel carriers, air defense systems, submarines, and rocket launchers. Russia has also sold military aircraft to Bolivia, and less sophisticated goods to its former Cold War client Nicaragua. It has also marketed its military goods to less anti-US states, selling 8 MI-17 helicopters to Peru in April 2010,23 using funds initially earmarked to purchase Chinese tanks, but diverted to combat narcotrafficking in the Apurimac and Ene river valley (VRAE).24

#### Russian Latin America strategy is critical to its Arm Sales Market

Blank 2011

Stephen Blank (Professor, Strategic Studies, U.S. Army War College) August 18 2011 "Russia's Second Wind in Latin America," PERSPECTIVES ON THE AMERICAS, https://www6.miami.edu/hemispheric-policy/Perspectives\_on\_the\_Americas/Blank-Latam2011-FINAL.pdf

Whereas in the previous thrust into Latin America, Moscow focused primarily, though ¶ not exclusively, on reliable friends like Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, to whom it ¶ either sold a lot of arms or gave considerable economic and energy assistance, today ¶ Moscow fully appreciates Brazil’s dominant position in Latin America, has cemented ¶ bilateral and multilateral ties with it through the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) ¶ organization, and devotes its primary attention on Brazil, while not neglecting other ¶ targets of opportunity. Putin has called Brazil a strategic partner for Russia and cited ¶ bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, as well as in nuclear energy, space, metals, ¶ biotechnologies and telecommunications.7¶ Beyond that, Russia has long sought entrée ¶ into Brazil’s arms market and it continues to do so vigorously.¶ Whereas earlier Moscow wanted to show Washington that Moscow could play in Latin ¶ America too, now Moscow’s broader primary objective is support for Russia’s goal of a ¶ multipolar world that constrains U.S. power and forces Washington to heed Moscow’s ¶ voice before acting. Thus Russia’s new activity builds upon previous policy statements ¶ by leading officials. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Latin America and Russia ¶ are natural partners, not because of Latin America’s economic growth, but because of ¶ the congruence between Latin governments’ foreign policies and Russia’s support of a ¶ multipolar world.8¶ Similarly Putin also stated that “Latin America is becoming a ¶ noticeable link in the chain of the multipolar world that is forming – we will pay more and ¶ more attention to this vector of our economic and foreign policy.”9¶ As before, energy and arms sales are the main instruments of this foreign policy. The ¶ biggest recent deal concerns Brazil, not surprisingly, in view of the aforementioned ¶ “strategic partnership.” In July, the Russian oil company TNK-BP bought 45% of the ¶ Petra Energia project in the Amazonian micro-region of Alto-Solimões for about $1 ¶ billion. This project comprises 21 exploration blocks over an area of about 48,000 ¶ square kilometers in the Solimões river basin in the upper reaches of the Amazon, 11 of ¶ which are already being exploited.10 Paraguay, the least-explored Latin American ¶ country for hydrocarbons, just sent a delegation to the Russian company Gazprom which is interested in forming a joint venture with the Paraguayan state-run company ¶ Petropar, should it find reserves. Money is allegedly no object and Gazprom is ready to¶ conduct all phases of the operation: exploration, exploitation, transport and ¶ commercialization. Gazprom has already established joint ventures (JVs) with Bolivia ¶ and Venezuela, and its Bolivian deal could possibly give it entrée into Brazil’s electricity ¶ market.11 Beyond existing deals, Gazprom is also eyeing a 20% stake in Bolivia’s ¶ ACERO project and mulling “joint energy projects” with Peru.12 More broadly in the ¶ economic sphere, Russia is one of the states with which Ecuador is currently ¶ negotiating for loans.13¶ Moscow is concurrently concluding arms deals across the region and recently identified¶ Venezuela and Peru as particularly promising markets.14 Rosoboroneksport (ROE), ¶ Russia’s arms dealer, has consistently listed Latin America as a highly promising ¶ market for weapons. ROE claims (rather dubiously) that it offers customers a wide ¶ range of services connected with servicing and maintenance, spares, modernization of ¶ Soviet models, and perhaps most importantly, licensed manufacture of cutting-edge ¶ systems.15 ROE claims that there are no restrictions on selling Venezuela submarines ¶ (that are ideal platforms for weapons and drug smuggling) if Caracas requests them.16¶ Moscow is also about to sell Venezuela S-300V SAM missiles, since Venezuela ¶ presumably still believes the United States or some other country’s air force will attack ¶ it, most likely in retaliation for its ongoing support of insurgents and narco-traffickers ¶ across the continent.¶ 17 And the weapons bought in 2008-09 are now being distributed to ¶ Venezuelan military units (presumably some of them then go to groups such as the ¶ FARC), the Colombian guerrilla group.¶ 18 Venezuela is building a plant to repair Russianmade helicopters which are allegedly popular for anti-narcotics use, a plant that will ¶ undoubtedly service many, if not all, of the Russian helicopters sold to Latin American ¶ governments.¶ 19 Cuba, as well, may be ready to move from buying spare parts to buying ¶ new systems.20 Meanwhile Peru has bought over $130 million of weapons, including ¶ modern versions of Mi-17 helicopters, MiG-29 fighters and Kornet-E anti-tank missile ¶ systems in the past few years.21 Meanwhile, Bolivia also is interested in Russian ¶ helicopters.22

### Cuba

#### Close Cuba-Russia collaboration now – key to Russia’s containment strategy

Blank 2009

[Stephen, Professor of Russian National Security Studies at the

Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College in Pennsylvania, “Russia in Latin America: Geopolitical Games in the US's Neighborhood”, www.ifri.org/downloads/ifriblankrussiaandlatinamericaengapril09.pdf‎]

In a similar vein, Moscow has not forgotten about its military partnership with Cuba. Russia has pledged to continue military technological cooperation (arms sales) with Cuba.80 Russian officials continue to say Cuba holds a key role in Russian foreign policy and that Russia considers it a permanent partner in Latin America.81 Neither has Moscow neglected its attempts to gain lasting positions of economic influence in Latin America and ties of mutual or at lest professed mutual economic advantage. Many of these discussions and agreements to date revolve around either exploring for oil and/or gas in and around Cuba and Venezuela, or constructing Chavez’s Pan-American pipeline from Venezuela to Argentina. Russia and Venezuela are also discussing participation in a gas cartel, another cherished Russian project. Russia will also mine bauxite and produce aluminum in Venezuela. These states are also creating or discussing the creation of a binational bank. Venezuela and Cuba are also discussing space projects with Russia.82 However, the economic crisis will undoubtedly make itself felt here too. Cuba may want restoration of former economic cooperation with Russia, but today’s Russia cannot afford it. Nor is large-scale Russian investment in Venezuela possible. Accordingly projects like the plan to carry gas from Venezuela to Argentina across the Amazon basin which was under-financed to begin with, and economically questionable as well, will probably not proceed.83 In fact few projects have actually been signed or carried out, or will be. Medvedev sidestepped Chavez’s call for a real alliance and no major agreements were signed during his trip.84 Indeed, Cuba may be turning back to Moscow because it cannot depend any longer on Venezuela’s energy supplies due to the crisis.85 Similarly although Nicaragua seeks larger trade links between Russia, China, and Latin American members of ALBA, the difficulties are immense. While Ortega acknowledges the presence of a crisis, it is unlikely that Moscow and Beijing will create an ALBA monetary zone based on a regional currency as he wishes.86 For the same reason the agreement between Moscow and Caracas to trade in their national currencies may not go far.87

### Cuba – Embargo

#### The embargo gives Russia credibility to expand into Latin America – they paint themselves as the alternative to western imperialism

Valkulenko 2012

[Darya, Research Associate at Council on Hemispheric Affairs, “RUSSIA VS. USA: ECONOMIC COLD WAR”, http://www.coha.org/russia-vs-usa-economic-cold-war/comment-page-1/]

The current economic competition between the Russian Federation and the United States in the Western Hemisphere bears striking similarity to the political antagonism prevalent during the Cold War. This deep seated rivalry still influences world affairs, as the United Nations Security Council cannot enact any major decision without an agreement between those two powers. However, a pragmatic view of the world economy plays a greater role now in the determination of Russia’s priorities and strategies as it begins to catch up with the U.S. in its exposure to Latin American economic interests. As of late, the Russian Federation has gained economic ground over the United States in various parts of the Latin American region. For example, Washington’s embargo on Cuba gives Russia the opportunity to fill in the economic hollows left by the “imperialist neighbor.” While Washington engages in very limited trade with its ancient foe, Russia-Cuban links have been growing stronger with each passing year. Recently, the Russian oil company Zarubezhneft announced its plan to invest $100 million USD in Cuba by 2025. Considering that deposits of Cuban oil are estimated to reach 20 billion barrels, the Russians’ investment plan appears as if it will bring considerable profits in the near future to both sides. [1] The recent activity in Ecuador presents another aspect of Russia’s growing economic attraction to Latin America. At the end of July 2012, the Ecuadorian government signed the “memorandum of understanding” with Gazprom, Russia’s largest oil and gas company. The memorandum will launch the exploration of the natural-gas field in the southern coastal areas of Ecuador. [2] This “Bolivarian country” (in reference to the state’s left-leaning state ideology) will gain ample royalties in conjunction with the development of its energy sector, while Russia will secure market access into Ecuador via their already impressive natural gas reserves. Notably, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa continues to advocate continental leadership independent of U.S. influence, thereby welcoming Russian influence. Gazprom, together with another oil company, Rosneft, are clearly linked to Russian foreign policy. The Russian government owns 50.002 percent of shares in Gazprom and 75 percent in Rosneft thus President of Russia, Putin, oversees strategies of both companies. [3] Gazprom is the world’s largest producer of natural gas and the second largest producer of oil in the world with 9.7 million barrels per day, just behind Saudi Aramco. Rosneft is the world’s 15th largest oil and gas producer. [4] The wielding of such economic weight serves as a powerful foreign relations force as Russia looks to enter new global markets, firming up the already inextricable relationship between politics and economics. The Cuban and Ecuadorian examples demonstrate how the United States’ continuing ideologically-based economic ties with Latin America could invite other large world players to represent investment portfolios to the region. The United States clearly does not take full advantage of its geographical proximity to Latin America, even as Russia pushes for greater markets throughout that region. At the time of the Cold War, bipolarity was intensified by a constant ideological race to include as many Third World countries under either Soviet Union or or the U.S. umbrella. Today the two compete over markets and trade partners throughout Latin America. In this battle Russia is clearly winning, because of its firm economic pragmatism. One observes the phenomenon of increasing Russian influence in Latin America in the development a solid relationship between ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) and Moscow. Although Russia is not technically allied with ALBA—which is known for its left-wing ideology—Moscow is not wasting the opportunity to support anti-Western declarations espoused by the Bolivarian states. Former Russian President, Medvedev, has declared significant perspectives for cooperation, especially in economic development, highlighting the pragmatic nature that Russian economic policy has adopted over the last 20 years. [5] Possible future nationalization of Russian assets by Latin American governments and political disagreements within the region have yet to deter Russia from vigorously embracing the emerging market. The Russian Federation has proven capable of negotiating with various leftist governments and has worked around the U.S. embargo against Cuba. The country appears to prioritize potential returns on its investments over ideology and public opinion by investing in controversial industries including arms and pipelines. The economic potential of some countries could have a lasting impact on how we view the world politically. The words investment, profit and trade have been added to the everyday vocabulary of politicians. However, Russian politicians are ready to apply those words in Spanish more often than other counterparts.

### Cuba – Oil

#### Drilling is key to Cuban-Russian reproach – plan will infringe Russia

Voice from Russia 2012

[“Russia and Cuba: Old Friendships Never Wither”, http://02varvara.wordpress.com/tag/havana/]

Russia and Cuba are strengthening their bilateral relations again after a break that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union supplied Cuba with oil, up to 13 million tons each year, and quantities of arms. In return, it received Cuban tobacco, coffee, fruit, and sugar and enjoyed the right to build and operate military facilities on Cuban territory. However, after the Soviet collapse these exchanges went downhill. The oil was cut off. In the early 90s, Russia shut its military training centre in Cuba. In 2002, it also closed its signals intelligence centre near the Cuban town of Lourdes, withdrawing all 1,000 personnel from the facility.¶ The millennium turn was the low point of the relationship. However, under Vladimir Putin, Russian-Cuban ties started to pick up again. In 2000, Putin visited Havana. In 2006, during a Havana visit by Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov, Cuba’s Soviet-era debts to Russia were finally settled, and Cuba received a 335 million dollar (11.925 billion Roubles. 275 million Euros. 215 million UK Pounds) Russian credit line, which allowed it to procure spare parts for some of its Soviet-made machinery and weaponry. In 2009, Cuban President Raúl Modesto Castro Ruz visited Moscow. This Wednesday, he arrived again, amid summertime heat, which he said reminded him of Havana. After discussing matters with Prime Minister Medvedev, he proceeded to the suburban dacha of President Putin.¶ President Putin said, “Some time ago, Russia and Cuba marked 110 years since they established diplomatic ties. These 110 years have seen ups and downs in relations, but at present, the relations are on the rise. Although pragmatic, they don’t negate the positive legacy of the past. We’re glad to welcome you. I do hope we’ll be able to review the entire spectrum of Russian-Cuban relations”. President Putin also used the occasion to extend his best wishes to veteran Cuban leader Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz (President Castro’s elder brother).¶ President Castro said he was looking forward to a very productive Moscow visit, saying, “We live in a very complex and rapidly changing world. During my previous visit, we devoted time to the challenges faced by our countries in 2009. Today, we’re discussing the current situation. I’m always happy to meet with my old friends in the Russian capital. I expect my working visit to be very busy and highly productive”. After meeting with President Putin, Señor Castro shall meet with Nikolai Patrushev, the head of the Russian National Security Council.¶ Annual trade between Russia and Cuba already tops 220 million dollars (7.175 billion Roubles. 180 million Euros. 140 million UK Pounds) and continues to grow. Importantly, it isn’t limited to arms sales. Russia’s Gazpromneft is drilling for oil and gas in the Cuban sector of the Gulf of Mexico. Other Russian companies are helping Cuba develop electricity generation. Last year also saw a 30 percent increase in Russian tourist visits to Cuba. Russian holidaymakers on the island are rapidly catching up with European and Canadian ones.

### Mexico

#### Russia is expanding trade to Mexico – key go growth

LAHT 2010

[Latin American Herald Tribune, the main source of news for the English-reading public about Latin America and to satisfy the need for fair and balanced information, “Russia Ready to Sell Weapons to Mexico”, <http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=352505&CategoryId=14091>, February 24, 2010, NK]

MEXICO CITY – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Mexico is interested in buying equipment and weapons from his country to combat drug trafficking and organized crime.¶ At a joint press conference with Mexican counterpart Patricia Espinosa, Lavrov said that his country is expanding its weapons sales abroad and has increased the number of supply contracts it has in all regions of the world, a move that is “a purely economic question, not political.”¶ Regarding the volume of its arms sales, Russia is still “behind the United States, but we’re seeing certain rather serious progress,” Lavrov said.¶ The Mexican government is interested in acquiring different types of weapons, “including helicopters for coastal monitoring,” and other equipment “to fight drug trafficking and organized crime, that I hope will help our Mexican friends to combat this scourge,” the Russian official said.¶ The United States is already supplying Mexico with arms and equipment for the drug war.¶ Espinosa met on Tuesday with her Russian counterpart, who is on an official visit to Mexico to review all aspects of bilateral relations and reach agreement on pushing for new measures to strengthen those links.¶ Both countries emphasized their interest in signing an Investment Promotion and Reciprocal Protection accord, as well as pushing forward with cooperation agreements in energy, nuclear power, maritime and air transportation and financial and customs cooperation.¶ Espinosa reiterated Mexico’s invitation for Russia to participate in the events this year to commemorate the bicentennial of the country’s independence from Spain and the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution

### Venezuela

#### Russia engaging Venezuela to counter the US

Maloof 2013

[Michael, Security Policy Analyst at Office of Secretary of Defense, “RUSSIA-CHINA STANDOFF IN VENEZUELA”, http://www.wnd.com/2013/03/russia-china-standoff-in-venezuela/]

WASHINGTON – As Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez remains gravely ill and may die soon, Russia and China are weighing their future in the country where they have billions of dollars in oil investments, according to report from Joseph Farah’s G2 Bulletin. In an effort to secure a position for the future, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent close former KGB associate Igor Sechin to Venezuela to discuss with Venezuelan Vice President Nicolas Maduro future bilateral relations. Sechin has been handling Latin American issues for years. He also happens to be the executive chairman of the Russian oil conglomerate Rosneft. Sechin and Maduro finalized a number of agreements that help assure Russia’s future position in Venezuela and keeps pace with China, which has loaned billions of dollars to the Chavez government to help ensure security of its own oil investments in the country. Both countries are in the process of helping develop Venezuela’s oil reserves, said to be the largest in the world at an estimated 296 billion barrels. Regional sources say that Sechin negotiated almost $47 billion in investments in the Venezuelan oil sector, including agreements to set up a joint Russia-Venezuela drilling and manufacturing company and to permit increased Russian access to offshore oil reserves. However, both countries also have an ulterior strategic reason for maintaining their position in Venezuela, and that is having a base from which to watch and undertake a containment approach toward the United States Russia is using its investments as a way to obtain more bases for its navy. In 2008, Russia sent in long-range bombers and a naval squadron to Venezuela. While it hasn’t done a repeat of these deployments, Russia wants permanent basing rights in Venezuela. Russia also has expanded its arms sales to Venezuela, including more than 100,000 Kalashnikov rifles, Mi-35 helicopters, Su-30 jet fighters, air defense systems, tanks and armored vehicles. If Chavez dies, there is a question as to what extent a new leader will be as friendly to both Russia and China. Any new leadership probably will continue working with them but could be friendlier to the United States, unlike the Chavez regime, according to informed sources. In turn, this could create a climate for further American investment which the Russians would then find competitive with their own interests.

#### Venezuela is key to Russia’s containment strategy

Blank 2009

[Stephen, Professor of Russian National Security Studies at the

Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College in Pennsylvania, “Russia in Latin America: Geopolitical Games in the US's Neighborhood”, www.ifri.org/downloads/ifriblankrussiaandlatinamericaengapril09.pdf‎]

The dominance of geopolitics is clearly seen in Russian foreign policy towards its main partners in Latin America: Venezuela and Cuba. The Cuban and Venezuelan economies, especially in the present crisis, cannot offer much tangible benefit to Russia. Therefore geopolitical and strategic considerations outweigh the relatively large economic interaction with these states. For example, Patrushev told Ecuador’s government that Russia wanted to collaborate with its intelligence agency, “to expand Moscow’s influence in Latin America.”61 Russia also signed an agreement to sell Ecuador weapons.62 Most probably Russia wants to link Ecuador and Venezuela with Russian weapons and intelligence support against Colombia. Since both of them are antagonistic to Colombia they can then support the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) narcotrafficantes— as Chavez has been—threaten a U.S. ally, and seek to pin Washington down in another dirty war.63 Undoubtedly Moscow fully recognizes that Chavez has converted Venezuela into a critical transshipment center for narcotics from both Latin America and West Africa, that he supports insurgencies and terrorists throughout Latin America, and that he has expansionist and revolutionary designs on Colombia; the Kremlin seeks to exploit those factors for Russia’s own anti-American purposes.64 Therefore one must treat reports of actual or forthcoming Russian agreements with Nicaragua and Venezuela on counter-drug cooperation with great wariness as they are likely to be smokescreens to obscure Moscow’s apparently conscious support for drug running into America, Europe, and Latin America.65 Indeed, reports from 2003 point to penetration of Mexico’s narcotics gangs by Russian criminals.66 More recently, in early 2009 a Russian and a Cuban were arrested for drug smuggling in Yucatan.67 Ironically there is a need for such cooperation between Latin American states and Russia. Viktor Ivanov, the director of the Russian Federal Service for Control over Narcotics Trafficking, recently said that, “information indicates that South American drug cartels view Russia, Ukraine, and Poland as the countries with the most conducive conditions for distributing narcotics and sending them on to Western Europe.”68 Simultaneously Russia wants to increase cooperation among the BRIC members’ intelligence services and Latin American agencies in general. Clearly Moscow wants to establish permanent roots in Latin America and use those contacts as bases for political influence to support those states and potential insurgent movements against the US.69 These are only some of the reasons why Moscow’s arms sales to Venezuela, and projected sales to Cuba are perhaps the only dangerous aspects of its policies in Latin America. They clearly aim to give Chavez the means to foment his “Bolivarian Revolution” throughout Latin America. Chavez is running or selling weapons to insurgents and left-wing regimes all over the continent. Chilean, Colombian, and especially Brazilian reports all voice alarm about the 5.4 billion US dollars in Russian arms sales to Venezuela. These reports raise the specter of Venezuela “detonating” a continental arms race, acquiring the largest Latin American naval fleet due to its purchase of submarines, the comprehensive equipping of Venezuela’s armed, naval, and air forces with huge (by regional standards) arms purchases. In 2008, Reports confirmed that starting in 2003, if not earlier, these weapons (automatic rifles, ammunition, etc.) have migrated from Venezuela to the FARC. This causes great fear that Russian arms will underwrite insurgencies and drug running (submarines being excellently equipped for that purpose) rather than defend Venezuela’s security.70 In addition, the sheer scale of ongoing Russian arms sales to Venezuela since 2004 justifies alarm as they make no strategic sense— unless Chavez is actually planning an arms race in Latin America—given the absence of any US or other military threat. Chavez knows this, claiming that he has ordered air defense missiles to protect oil derricks.71 Therefore there are purposes beyond the legitimate defense of Venezuela for these weapons. Those systems include 24 Su-30 fighters, 100,000 Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles, Ak-103 assault rifles, BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles, and T-72 Main Battle Tanks are also expected to be bought later in 2009. Venezuela also bought 53 Mig-35 helicopters, (Mi-17V-s and Mi-35M helicopters). Russia will help develop factories in Venezuela that can make parts and ammunition for the rifles with a declared goal of producing 50,000 rifles a year. Venezuela plans to buy 12 Il-76 and Il-78 tankers and cargo aircraft, or possibly Il-96-300 military transport planes, Tor-M1 anti-air missiles (a fifth generation anti-aircraft system equally effective against planes, helicopters, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, cruise missiles, and high precision missiles), and Igla-S portable Surface to Air Missile (SAM) systems. Venezuela also seeks Mi-28n Hunter high-attack helicopters and is discussing the possible purchase of submarines.72 Earlier discussions concerned the sale of Project 636 submarines (among the quietest in the world) to Venezuela during 2011-13 along with torpedo and missile ordnance for its Navy. These purchases make no sense unless they are intended for purposes of power projection throughout Latin America; drug running with submarines and their protection against air attacks; or to provide a temporary base for Russian naval and air forces where they can be sheltered from attacks but threaten either North or South America.73 Putin may have said that permanent bases in Cuba and Venezuela are unnecessary, but this leaves the door open to temporary bases, including submarine bases.74 Much of what Russia sells to Venezuela is compatible with this possibility, as are Putin’s call for restoring Russia’s position in Cuba, ongoing talks between Russian and Cuban military officials, and Sechin’s aforementioned trips in 2008.75

### Venezuela – Oil

#### Russia wants to develop Venezuela’s oil resources to expand their regional influence

Marquez 2013

[Humberto, Inter Press Service, “Russia to Get Venezuelan Oil for a Few Cents a Barrel”, http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/03/russia-to-get-venezuelan-oil-for-a-few-cents-a-barrel/]

Russian state oil firm Rosneft and Venezuela’s PDVSA (Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.) have agreed to form a partnership to exploit an oilfield with estimated reserves of 40 billion barrels, strengthening the alliance between the two countries. For 1.5 billion dollars, the Russian company will take over 40 percent of a project at a Venezuelan deposit expected to produce 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude in five years’ time, executives from the two companies said. “It is an attractive deal for Rosneft to buy, or gain access to, reserves at a very low price. That 40 percent interest ‘buys’ 16 billion barrels at a cost of 10 cents of a dollar per barrel,” Víctor Poleo, a professor of graduate studies in oil economics at the Central University of Venezuela, told IPS. The cost of a barrel of oil on the international market is between 90 and 110 dollars. The crude in question is in the Orinoco oil belt, an area of 55,000 square kilometres in the southeast of Venezuela which is estimated to contain reserves of 1.2 trillion barrels, of which 240 billion barrels are technically recoverable, according to the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining. The government of Hugo Chávez (1999-2013), who died Mar. 5, named the oil blocks in the Orinoco belt after battles in the 1810-1824 war of independence and parcelled them out as concessions to mixed companies with PDVSA holding a minimum stake of 60 percent. The Hydrocarbons Law of 2006 replaced the service contracts that were formerly extended to foreign operators, which were now invited to become partners. Legally the oil reserves belong to the nation. Rosneft will pay PDVSA a bonus of 1.1 billion dollars for the rights to the new partnership in the Carabobo block, which has already been endorsed by the Venezuelan parliament. In April, the two companies will fine-tune the details of the formation of the new mixed company, named PetroVictoria. The Russian firm also took over 40 percent of the mixed company that is operating the nearby Junín block, when it bought the Russian-British consortium TNK-BP in October. The Junín reserves are estimated at 53 billion barrels, and Rosneft’s 40 percent share is greater than the 18 billion barrels it owns in Russia. With the addition of the Carabobo operation, “the book value of (Rosneft’s) shares is revalued at very low cost,” said Poleo, a critic of mixed companies because he considers they “relinquish our rights over the reserves. “At the end of the day, it means that for every 100 barrels produced from the Junín or Carabobo blocks, 40 will belong to Rosneft, which will also get 40 percent of the oil revenue,” said Poleo, who was vice minister for energy in the first three years of the Chávez administration. José Suárez Núñez, of the specialist publication Petrofinanzas, highlighted Russia’s inroads in the Orinoco belt, although he said “volumes for now are minuscule, and the crude is extra heavy and very costly to refine.” This contrasts “with deposits of lighter oil and (Russia’s) lead in production volumes, at 10 million bpd,” he told IPS. Most of the crude in the Orinoco oil belt is extra heavy, less than 10 degrees API (American Petroleum Institute classification), compared to over 30 degrees API in oil from the Middle East, Russia or the North Sea. Before distillation, this extra heavy oil must be improved in a process equivalent to partial refining. “Rosneft’s agreements with PDVSA are part of Russia’s projection towards Latin America, a region that has traditionally been in the sphere of influence of the United States,” said Kenneth Ramírez, an expert on oil geopolitics and president of the private Venezuelan Council of International Relations. This projection is part of “Russia’s grand strategy to re-emerge as a global power and replicate the advance of Washington over what was once its zone of influence, in central and southern Asia, the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Black Sea,” he told IPS. “Among its strategies is strengthening its ties with Brazil, the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and making advances to ALBA (the eight-member Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America) which is led by Venezuela,” Ramírez said. Russian President Vladimir Putin sent the head of Rosneft, Igor Sechin, as his special representative to the state funeral for Chávez on Mar. 8. Sechin met with Nicolás Maduro, the acting president of Venezuela and the candidate expected to win the Apr. 14 elections, to smooth over obstacles in the bilateral oil relationship. Local media indicate PDVSA is having difficulties meeting its financial commitments, pointing to delays in its obligations to Brazilian state oil company Petrobras for the construction of the Abreu e Lima refinery. But oil minister Rafael Ramírez, who is also head of PDVSA, confirmed “the commitment to continue the energy policy begun in 1999″ by the late president Chávez. “The strategic relationship with China and Russia will be deepened, in concordance with the multipolar scheme that has been the basis of the foreign policy of the revolution,” said the minister. As the projects are developed, the Russian-Venezuelan alliance will invest 46 billion dollars in the Orinoco belt, of which Moscow will contribute 17 billion dollars, he said. Kenneth Ramírez highlighted that Rosneft is also working in mature fields (those in which production has passed its peak) in areas other than the Orinoco belt, and has signed agreements to participate in future gas production and to supply drills for crude extraction. “Moscow isn’t seeking supplies of oil, since it has reserves of 88 billion barrels, but it’s looking for deals to leverage a strategic alliance,” he said.

## Internal Link

### US Expansion = War

#### Russia will perceive the plan as an attempt to undercut its influence – risk derailing US-Russian relations

Kuchins 2011

[Andrew Kuchins (Director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C) 8-10-2011 “Reset expectations: Russian assessments of U.S. power”,   
http://valdaiclub.com/usa/29520.html]

Russian perceptions of the United States and its role in the world provide a powerful lens not only for framing how Russia conceives its foreign and security policies—far more broadly than U.S.Russia bilateral relations—but also for understanding deeply rooted notions of contemporary Russian identity and even its domestic political system. For most of the second half of the twentieth century the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in a competitive struggle for global power and hegemony, and each country viewed its adversary as the principal “other” around which much of each country’s identity and foreign policy revolved. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a searing event for citizens of Russia as well as the other newly sovereign states of the region, yet for most policymakers and elites in Moscow old habits of measuring success or failure through a U.S.-centric prism have endured. Now, nearly 20 years past the Soviet collapse, perceptions of the United States probably remain more significant for Russia than for any other country in this study. As in other countries in this study, the dominant paradigm for Russian government officials and political elite is realism with probably a higher relative weight for the value of economic and military indices of power and lower relative weight for factors of soft power. In the traditional Russian calculus (czarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet), it is not the power of attraction that dominates; instead, it is the power of coercion, typically through intimidation or buying support—a very hard-edged realism. When Westerners emphasize values such as human rights and democracy, the default Russian reaction is deep skepticism that their interlocutors, especially the Americans, are being disingenuous. U.S. promotion of democracy, liberal capitalism, a rules-based system of global governance, and the like is interpreted as a collection of ideological fig leaves designed to conceal the naked U.S. ambition to expand its own power and influence abroad

#### US/Russian relations are at a turning point – US encroachment on Russia’s sphere of influence kills cooperation

Eyal 2010

[Jonathan, U.S., Russia truly committed to improving their relations, 26 June 2010, http://www.chinapost.com.tw/commentary/the-china-post/special-to-the-china-post/2010/06/26/262241/US-Russia.htm]

Yet the meeting between the Russian and American leaders also cements a blossoming new partnership between their countries, after decades of frosty relations. This is one foreign policy achievement for which U.S. President Obama can justifiably feel proud. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, all U.S. presidents have tried to forge better relations with Moscow, but usually with little success. The old Cold War confrontation was quickly replaced by a feeling of mutual resentment. The Russians objected to what they saw as **America's encroachment into their old sphere of influence,** as Nato kept expanding into Eastern Europe. And the U.S., in turn, fretted about the alleged absence of democratic reforms in Moscow. Relations sunk to their lowest ebb when Russian troops invaded Georgia in August 2008, a conflict exacerbated by miscalculations in both Moscow and Washington. But by the time Obama came to power, many of these disputes were already over. Nato's expansion into the former Soviet republics reached its natural conclusion, while in Russia, Medvedev, a politician who believes in diplomacy, took over from Vladimir Putin, now Prime Minister, who instinctively opted for confrontation. Obama identified a “reset” in U.S.-Russian relations as one of his chief foreign policy objectives. He cancelled plans to build U.S. missile defense installations in Europe, to Moscow's great delight. And he swiftly re-launched nuclear disarmament talks. There were hiccups on the way. Obama's sudden tilt towards Russia alarmed some European countries, who feared that their security interests would be sacrificed. A nuclear disarmament deal proved difficult to negotiate, and still has to be ratified by the U.S. Congress. And Obama himself committed a gaffe when, during his first official visit to Moscow early last year, he made disparaging remarks about Putin, who continues to exercise considerable influence. But ultimately, **Obama's strategy has worked because**, as Sergey Rogov, who heads Russia's Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies, points out, Russian officials were persuaded that Washington had truly abandoned its “paternalistic tone towards **Moscow.”** As a result, Russia swung behind the U.S. in adopting sanctions against Iran, and this ensured that China also accepted the need for sanctions. However, the U.S.-Russian rapprochement has only begun. Although bilateral trade has doubled during the past year, it still stands at a puny US$24 billion, less than America's trade with Taiwan, and a mere fraction of the total value of America's trade with China, a figure which is 15 times larger.

### Russian Expansion K2 Econ

#### Russia expanding influence it’s key to the economy

Goodrich 2011

[Lauren, 2011“Russia's Evolving Leadership”, STRATFOR, http://politicom.moldova.org/news/russias-evolving-leadership-perceptions-of-putin-part-2-222643-eng.html]

Putin’s goal was to fix the country, which meant restoring state control (politically, socially and economically), strengthening the FSB and military and **re-establishing Russia’s influence and international reputation** — especially in the former Soviet sphere of influence. To do so, Putin had to carry Russia through a complex evolution that involved shifting the country from accommodating to aggressive at specific moments. This led to a shift in global perceptions of Putin, with many beginning to see the former KGB agent as a hard-nosed autocrat set upon rekindling hostilities and renewing militarization. This perception of Putin is not quite correct. While an autocrat and KGB agent (we use the present tense, as Putin has said that no one is a former KGB or FSB agent), he hails from St. Petersburg, Russia’s most pro-Western city, and during his Soviet-era KGB service he was tasked with stealing Western technology. Putin fully understands the strength of the West and what Western expertise is needed to keep Russia relatively modern and strong. At the same time, his time with the KGB convinced him that Russia can never truly be integrated into the West and that it can be strong only with a consolidated government, economy and security service and a single, autocratic leader. Putin’s understanding of Russia’s two great weaknesses informs this worldview. The first weakness is that Russia was dealt a poor geographic hand. It is inherently vulnerable because it is surrounded by great powers from which it is not insulated by geographic barriers. The second is that its population is composed of numerous ethnic groups, not all of which are happy with centralized Kremlin rule. A strong hand is the only means to consolidate the country internally while repelling outsiders. Another major challenge is that Russia essentially lacks an economic base aside from energy. Its grossly underdeveloped transportation system hampers it from moving basic necessities between the country’s widely dispersed economic centers. This has led Moscow to rely on revenue from one source, energy, while the rest of the country’s economy has lagged decades behind in technology.

### A2 China Influence

#### Chinese influence doesn’t hurt Russia – they aren’t competing

Ellis 2011

[Evan, assistant professor with the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS). His research focus is on Latin America’s relationship with external actors, including China, Russia, and Iran, “Emerging Multi-Power Competitions in Latin America”, http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2011/2011-1/2011\_1\_03\_ellis\_eng\_s.pdf]

Because of the shared “anti-western” focus and because the specific geopolitical agendas pursued by actors such as Russia, India and China in Latin America generally complement each other, these nations are not likely to come into conflict over their courtship of populist regimes such as Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia. The critical exception to this harmony, however, involves strategic commercial issues, such as which nation gets to develop the preponderance of Venezuela’s petroleum in the Orinoco belt, or the significant deposits of iron and lithium, and perhaps uranium, in Bolivia

#### Doesn’t trigger the disad – cooperative strategy

Maloof 2013

[Michael, Security Policy Analyst at Office of Secretary of Defense, “Russia, China snuggling up”, http://www.wnd.com/2013/04/russia-china-snuggling-up/]

A sign of closer ties between China and Russia has emerged with an agreement for Russia to export much-needed oil to China over the next decade, to be followed by a deal for the export of natural gas to meet the burgeoning needs of China’s population, according to report from Joseph Farah’s G2 Bulletin. China also will have access to Russia’s major energy reserves in the Arctic. These agreements were reached in the recent visit by newly installed Chinese President Xi Jinping to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. According to regional analysts, the deals also indicate closer collaboration between the two countries to counter U.S. influence in the region and elsewhere in the world. Such collaboration recently has been seen not only in the Central Asian region but now in South America – a region that long had been regarded as being in the U.S. sphere of influence. Both countries have sought to work out long-term deals, for example, in Venezuela to maintain their access to Latin American energy resources and to secure the prospect of basing rights there.

### A2 Relations Resilient

#### Relations are vulnerable – US infringement in Russian sphere ends them.

Suslov and Karaganov 2011

[Sergei Karaganov, Dean of the School of the World Economy and International Affairs at the National Research University–Higher School of Economics (NRU-HSE); Chairman of the Presidium, the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy (CFDP); Chairman of the Editorial Board, Russia in Global Affairs journal AND Dmitry Suslov, Deputy Director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies, NRU-HSE; Assistant Dean for Research, the School of the World Economy and International Affairs, NRUHSE; Deputy Director of Research Programs at CFDPThe U.S.—Russia Relations after the «Reset»: Building a New Agenda. A View from Russia Report by the Russian Participants of the Working Group on the Future of the Russian—U.S. Relations, March, http://vid-1.rian.ru/ig/valdai/US-Russia%20relations\_eng.pdf]

3.2.6. Russia and the U.S. have not overcome their obsolete geopolitical controversies. The solution of many of them has been postponed or they have become latent. For example, the U.S. has not changed its basically negative stance on Russia’s strengthening its positions in the post-Soviet space and on the development of the Russia-led integration project. Today this stance has less tactical influence on the practical agenda of the U.S.—Russian relations than before. The accumulation by Russia of a «critical mass» of successes in the postSoviet space or the emergence of new instability in the Caucasus or Central Asia may again put the parties’ rivalry in the region on the top of the agenda of their relations. On the part of Russia, the logic of geopolitical confrontation with the U.S. is manifested in its policy towards some anti-American states (Iran, Venezuela and Syria), which Russia has been pursuing largely in revenge for Washington’s support of anti-Russian regimes and groups in the post-Soviet space. 3.2.6.1. Meanwhile, even a limited success of integration projects in the former Soviet Union will not turn Russia and its potential allies in these projects into a challenge to the United States, especially into a military-political challenge. No less senseless and even counterproductive is Russia’s symbolic counteraction to the U.S. where the latter has already lost or is losing its dominance due to objective circumstances. Indeed, Washington will never be able to return to the Monroe Doctrine, while Russia will not dominate Eurasia, which geopolitics of the past century feared so much. 3.2.7. Both parties, and especially the U.S., while declaring the objective to build a Whole Europe with an indivisible security space, in actual fact contribute to its persisting split. Guided by the old geopolitical conceptions, the U.S is still apprehensive of a whole Europe with a strong Russia, and therefore stands for the strengthening of the NATO-centric order there, to which Moscow might be «fastened» as a junior partner, at best. In Russia, the majority of the ruling elite call for creating a bipolar Euro-Atlantic space represented by NATO and the EU on the one part, and the CSTO and the CIS, on the other, with both parties being equal. This kind of order would mean a revival of bipolar Europe and appear as a farce after the Cold War tragedy. It must be noted though that Russia’s idea of a new European Security Treaty still aims at building a whole Europe. Our idea of creating an Alliance of Europe also has the same aim. 3.2.8. Therefore, despite the past two years of improvements, the U.S.- Russian relations remain fragile and unstable in the face of international political and especially domestic political risks. The relations may worsen if Russia and the U.S. again change the priorities in their foreign-policy interests and downgrade the significance of those of them that have ensured their political will to cooperate and minimize the negative impact of their disagreements. It may occur as a result of a sharp aggravation of one or several contradictions between Russia and the U.S. (i.e. escalation of violence in the Caucasus), changes in domestic policies in one or both countries, or a failure of the current U.S. «Big Strategy» and a change to the «new-old» foreign-policy course.

#### Russia is willing to blow up relations to protect its sphere of interest – Georgia proves.

Lyman 2011

[John Lyman is the Administrative Editor of Foreign Policy Digest, The Evolving Western and Russian Power Dynamic, Foreign Policy Digest, 1-1, http://www.foreignpolicydigest.org/2011/01/01/the-evolving-western-and-russian-power-dynamic/]

Russia has also displayed an effective use of soft power in its management of a relatively small number of states in its sphere of influence. It has provided Belarus with supplies of cheap oil and natural gas. This policy has allowed Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to stay in power, over protests by American and European diplomats. Russia has also pressured the government of Kyrgyzstan to end America’s military presence at the Manas air base, an episode that sheds light on Moscow’s efforts to limit any U.S. presence in Russia’s perceived sphere of influence. Moscow’s antagonisms may increasingly erupt in flashpoint issues, as illustrated by the 2008 war with Georgia, over U.S. and European objections. The brief conflict over a contentious province illustrates that Russia is not necessarily concerned about confronting an ally of the United States. The war also accomplished a goal for Russia, which was to have Georgian and Ukrainian NATO bids terminated. The war with Georgia also highlights Russian attempts to control a narrative for Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The U.S. and British led NATO military actions against Serbia in the 1990s relegated Russia to the sidelines where it had to watch an ally eventually surrender to the wishes of the international community. In 2008, a much more assertive and influential Russia could do little to dissuade the United States from acknowledging an independent Kosovo. 22 EU member states now recognize an independent Kosovo along with 69 UN member states.

## Impacts

### 2NC Relations

#### Russian expansion key to US-Russian relations – perception of equality is vital

Doyle 2012

[Michael, Cambridge, “America and the World: Foreign Policy, Post Apogee”, January 14, 2012, http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2012/01/14/america-and-the-world-foreign-policy-post-apogee]

Even though the long-term prospects of Russia bode poorly, the nation will remain a power to be reckoned with for some time. Russia has a sizable nuclear arsenal, a formidable military, and a seat on the UN Security Council. It is the largest country in the world by land area and is the world’s largest energy exporter. Russia also shares the Eurasian continent with China, a power that the United States hopes to abridge to some extent. As a consequence, there are a lot of reasons why the US should try to build bridges with Russia. Indeed, many factors point to a rapprochement with Russia in the decade ahead. Russia’s economy is expected to slow over the coming decade. This weaker economic position should make it less haughty and confrontational. The rise of China will also cause Russia to reevaluate its geo-political positions. Although Russia and China currently get along amicably, that could prove less true in the future. The Russian people have no desire to be drawn into the Chinese orbit and may look for partners that will assure an independent Russian sphere of influence in Eurasia. Another reason that there may be an improvement in Russian relations is because of the reorientation of US policy. The US is not pursuing NATO expansion and the Obama’s administration’s reset has been partially successful. Furthermore, the shift of US military orientation away from Europe should allay some of Russia’s concerns. US policy towards Russia should center on three goals. The US should endeavor to keep Russia proud, independent, and unafraid. The US should keep Russia proud by ensuring that Russia is treated as the great power it is. There is a lot of post-Soviet nostalgia still present in the country, and many Russians feel slighted at not being treated with the respect that used to be accorded to them. The US and others generated a lot of Russian hostility by treating the country as if it was a second rate power. Simply according Russia the status it feels it deserves, is an easy way to improve relations with the country. Secondly, the US should recognize that Russia wants to be an independent power, with a separate sphere of influence in Central Asia. It neither wants to be drawn into the Western orbit nor the Chinese orbit. If the US can accommodate this, it will find that an independent Russia can serve as a bulwark against a rising China. Thirdly, the US should attempt to keep Russia unafraid. This means that the US will have to make NATO look less threatening and mollify Russian concerns over a missile shield.

#### US-Russia relations solve multiple scenarios for nuclear conflict

Pifer 2012

[Steven, director of the Brookings Arms Control Initiative and a senior fellow with the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence and the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings, “The Future Course of the U.S.-Russia Relationship”, http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2012/03/21-arms-control-pifer]

Looking forward, a positive relationship with Russia can advance U.S. interests, even if Washington and Moscow differ on some issues and if the United States is frustrated about corruption and the democracy and human rights situation in Russia. Russian support remains critical to achieving key Washington policy goals such as sustaining pressure on the nuclear rogue states and supporting coalition military operations in Afghanistan. There are a number of issues on which Moscow can play a spoiler role if it believes the United States is not paying due regard to Russian interests. Improving U.S.-Russian relations further may prove more difficult than it has been in the past three years, as the easier questions have been settled. Nevertheless, Washington should seek to work with Russia on a number of issues. First, Washington should engage Moscow on a further bilateral round of nuclear arms reductions, this time including strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons, whether deployed or non-deployed, under a common ceiling in a follow-on agreement to New START. A sublimit on deployed strategic warheads could restrict those nuclear weapons of greatest concern. While Moscow currently shows little enthusiasm for further nuclear cuts, it may have incentives to deal. Such an agreement would promote a more stable balance at lower levels of nuclear weapons. It would respond to the concern expressed by the Senate in its resolution of ratification for New START that non-strategic nuclear weapons be addressed. And it could produce cost savings, freeing up defense resources to fund operations that the U.S. military is far more likely to engage in than nuclear war. Second, Washington and NATO should continue to pursue a cooperative missile defense arrangement with Russia. That prospect is currently stalled by Moscow’s demand for a legal guarantee that U.S. missile defenses in Europe not be directed against Russian strategic missile forces. While it is reasonable for the Russians to be concerned that missile defenses could affect the offense-defense relationship, that is a concern for the future. It is very difficult to see the U.S. plan for missile defenses in Europe over the next decade posing any serious threat to Russian strategic missiles. NATO should leave the door open for cooperation and provide transparency about its missile defense capabilities and plans. A cooperative missile defense arrangement would be a significant achievement. It would remove one of the thornier issues from the U.S.-Russia and NATO-Russia agendas; provide for a better defense of Europe than just a NATO system alone; and give the Russian military greater transparency about U.S. and NATO missile defense capabilities. Such transparency could help assure Moscow that those missile defense capabilities pose no threat. Such cooperation, moreover, could prove a “game-changer” in attitudes by making NATO and Russia genuine partners in defending Europe against ballistic missile attack. Third, Washington should seek to work closely with Russia in the Six Party process on North Korea and the UNSC Five-plus-One talks with Iran. Russia may have only marginal influence in the Six Party talks, but it has absolutely no interest in a nuclear-armed North Korea. The Russians have been helpful in the Six Party process in the past. Iran presents a more complex question. The Russians do not want to see Iran with nuclear weapons, but the level of urgency about this question in Moscow is less than it is in Washington. For the United States, a nuclear-armed Iran is a nightmare scenario. Russia, on the other hand, has had a more normal relationship with Tehran over the past 35 years. For the Russians, an Iran with nuclear weapons would be a very negative development, to be sure, but they believe—correctly or not—that they could cope with it, much as the United States has sought to deal since 1998 with an openly nuclear Pakistan. Moscow probably will not go as far as Washington would like in further pressuring the Iranian government, but that does not diminish the fact that the Russians have come a long way in supporting mandatory UN sanctions. The West would not want to see Moscow ease up on the measures it has adopted to date. Fourth, continued cooperation on Afghanistan remains very much in the U.S. interest. The United States and NATO need Moscow’s assistance for continued ease in moving equipment and personnel to—and, as NATO begins to draw down, from—Afghanistan. Even in the best of circumstances, Afghanistan is likely to remain an unsettled and fragile state after 2014. The Russians are concerned that instability there could spill over into Central Asia. It would make sense for Washington to intensify consultations with Moscow on steps that might be taken to bolster the stability of the Central Asian states that border Afghanistan.

### Turns Global Econ

#### Russian economic stability key to world economy

Cooper 2008

[William, Congressional Research Service Specialist in International Trade and Finance Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, “Russia’s Economic Performance and Policies and Their Implications for the United States,” May 30, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34512.pdf]

The greater importance of Russia’s economic policies and prospects to the United States lie in their indirect effect on the overall economic and political environment in which the United States and Russia operate. From this perspective, Russia’s continuing economic stability and growth can be considered positive for the United States. Because financial markets are interrelated, chaos in even some of the smaller economies can cause uncertainty throughout the rest of the world. Such was the case during Russia’s financial meltdown in 1998. Promotion of economic stability in Russia has been a basis for U.S. support for Russia’s membership in international economic organizations, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). As a major oil producer and exporter, Russia influences world oil prices that affect U.S. consumers.

### A2 Red Spread

#### **Their argument is just alarmist Cold War rhetoric**

**Walle 2012**

[Walter. Research Associate at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs¶ "Russia Turns to the South for Military and Economic Alliances." Council on Hemispheric Affairs. N.p., 08 May 2012. Web. 09 July 2013.¶ MA]

Without a doubt, Russia’s alliances in Latin America are part of a greater geopolitical game. Yet, it should not be forgotten why there is so much resentment within the region against the U.S. Perhaps, the displeasure is the consequence of decades of U.S. intervention in Latin American affairs in order to maintain strategic interests. Russia has been accused by numerous editorial writers of possessing too much leverage over Latin American; it is understandable, if not forgivable, that Washington perceives Russian-Latin American relations as incursions into the U.S.’ vicinity of interest, no matter how archaic such thinking may be. Inarguably, Russia has “bought” the interest of Latin American governments that are not totally committed to Washington’s policies; it has furnished the region with investments in energy infrastructure, strengthened military capabilities, and provided means to combat drug trafficking.¶ However, it is important to observe that Russia is not the only country that is vying to extend its influence over the region. The European Union, China, Taiwan and Iran have all demonstrated an interest in economic and political opportunities and partnerships, as well as diplomatic alliances gestating in the region. But Cold War rhetoric will still continue to resonate; both with Russia’s influence in Latin America and the U.S.’ presence in the Caucasus. Under this dogmatic hangover, Washington will always be suspicious of its longtime rival’s actions, in Latin America or elsewhere; even if Russia’s intentions in engaging Latin American governments are wholeheartedly innocent. By archaically viewing this region as America’s backyard, à la the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. fails to properly conceptualize the depth of Russian involvement in Latin America, mis-characterizing it as a strategic threat, while in reality this may not be the case.

# Aff

## Non-Unique

### Russian Influence Decreasing – Venezuela

#### Chavez death means Russian economic relations will decline

CWCP 3/9

(Center for World Conflict and Peace, “Russia’s Uncertain Position in post-Chávez Venezuela”, http://centerforworldconflictandpeace.blogspot.com/2013/03/russias-uncertain-position-in-post.html)

The domestic and regional implications of the death of Hugo Chávez are numerous and wide-ranging, but unique to Venezuela is the reverberations the death of its leader will have in faraway Russia and Eastern Europe. With the passing of “El Comandante," it’s possible that Russia’s geopolitical influence in Latin America may weaken and that it’s arms exports will decline, directly affecting Russia’s economic growth. Much of this depends on who succeeds Chávez and what sort of relationship his successor pursues with Russia. In the 21st century, Russia has had a tendency in its foreign policy to pursue relations with smaller, less powerful, but in many cases very central, states in regions around the world (i.e. Serbia in the Balkans, Syria in the Middle East, etc.) in an effort to increase its own role in the so-called “multi-polar” world. While Russia’s major ally in Latin America is actually Brazil, Russia has found Venezuela to be a willing partner in supporting Russia’s own foreign policy, with Venezuela even going so far as to (hypocritically) recognize South Ossetia’s declaration of independence from Georgia while opposing Kosovo’s independence from Serbia because of the “bad precedent” it would set. Venezuelan vice president Nicolás Maduro said that "the unipolar world is collapsing and finishing in all aspects, and the alliance with Russia is part of that effort to build a multipolar world." Russia’s ties with Venezuela as its Latin American partner was a perfect match- Chávez was an outspoken critic of the United States and his country controlled vast reserves of energy, which gave Russia an excellent opportunity to exert its influence in the country and counter American power in the region, namely, by combining mutual feelings on U.S. influence abroad with the capacity to develop Venezuela’s energy industry. Venezuela was billed as a regional leader for Latin America. For while Chávez’s leftist administration was one of several that proliferated throughout the region, his had been by far the most vocal (it is not uncommon, in fact, for Latin American governments to be relatively aligned on the right-left spectrum, with rightist governments predominating in the 1970’s and 80’s). Chávez carefully developed relations with Evo Morales of Bolivia, Rafael Correa of Ecuador and the two most recent Argentine administrations, that of the late Nestor Kirchner and his wife Crisitina Fernández (who succeeded her late husband in 2007). His flamboyant anti-American rhetoric was occasionally balanced out by Brazil’s center-left president Inácio Lula da Silva and Lula’s successor, Dilma Rousseff. Nevertheless, Venezuela provided a beacon through which Russia was able to exert geopolitical influence in a region far beyond its periphery. One of the biggest areas of cooperation between Russia and Venezuela is the energy sector, a fact recently underscored by Vladimir Putin’s decision to send Igor Sechin, CEO of Russia’s state owned oil company Rosneft, as a special presidential envoy to Hugo Chávez’s funeral. Venezuela has the largest proven reserves of crude oil in the world, but the oil is in need of a more intense refinement process than most other crude supplies around the world. Russia has the technological capabilities Venezuela needs to refine its heavy crude, and Russian energy companies are active in several aspects of the Venezuelan energy industry. Russian companies plan to invest $17.6 billion in Venezuela by 2019 and multiply energy output fourfold in an attempt to expand cooperation to offshore areas and oil services, according to Reuters. Sechin has said Rosneft will finance production with loans from Russian banks and credit lines from international banks. Because the Venezuelan economy is currently in shambles, it is highly likely that the Russian-Venezuelan energy cooperation will continue, with the possibility that if a government friendlier to the United States should take power, existing contracts with Russian companies would continue, but that American companies would be invited to participate in new ventures. The situation in Venezuela may actually effect Russia’s energy relations with one of its Eastern European neighbors- Belarus. Belarus has had a rather unique relationship with Russia, and is part of a “union state” with Russia. Yet since 2007, the one thorn in the side of Belarus-Russia relations has been energy, mainly because of a dispute which emerged when Russia accused Belarus of siphoning Russian gas transported through Belarus and selling it at world market prices (Belarus had enjoyed Russian gas at a discounted price). When Russia refused to meet Belarusian quotas for energy imports, Belarus turned to Venezuela for energy imports starting in 2010, with energy shipped via tankers from Venezuela to the Ukrainian port of Odessa, then up to Belarus through a pipeline. Belarus has sought 23 million tons of oil from Russia for 2013, but Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko has stated that if Russia will only sell Belarus up to 18 million tons (as it has stated) and it will import energy from Venezuela and Azerbaijan. Yet if Venezuela for any reason suspends its sales of energy to Belarus, this may give Russia more leverage over Belarus as it (Belarus) will have lost a valuable supplier of alternative energy. This situation seems unlikely since Venezuela can only benefit from the influx of cash, but is still an example of how far reaching the implications of the upcoming transfer of power in Venezuela really are. After energy, Russia’s most valuable export is armaments and military hardware. Chávez constantly feared a U.S. invasion of Venezuela, and had been engaged in a long-standing dispute with neighboring Colombia over the presence of U.S. troops in Colombia (these U.S. troops including most notably the U.S.’s élite Special Forces, whose purpose is to assist with counter-narcotics and counter-insurgency). This, in principle, was the basis for his decision to enter into contractual agreements with Russia regarding arms sales. Venezuela is the second-largest customer for Russian military hardware (after India), and as Russia’s economy is famously lacking in diversity of exports outside of energy, a willing market for arms is greatly welcomed (a situation only enhanced by the instability in another major importer of Russian arms- Syria). In 2009, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned of a possible arms race between Colombia and Venezuela. Since 2006, the gross income for Russian military sales abroad has doubled, and Russian arms sales are now almost exclusively handled through state-owned company Rosoboronexport. Chávez’s death, however, could reduce Russia’s client relationship with Venezuela in the arms industry, depending on how the succession plays out. It would be easy to assume that Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela’s vice president, would succeed the late Chávez, yet Venezuela’s opposition is relatively strong. The Venezuelan economy, despite the strength of the country’s crude reserves, is not entirely healthy, and if the Venezuelan opposition ends up in power they may decide that it is not economically viable to have such contracts arms with Russia. Viachelav Nikonov, deputy chair of the Russian Parliament’s committee on foreign affairs, has stated that he does not believe a new Venezuelan administration would be able to opt out of currently existing contracts, but future contracts may not be pursued.

### Russian Influence Decreasing – Cuba Oil

#### Russia abandoning Cuban oil development

Franks 5/29

[Jeff, May 29, 2013, “Cuban oil hopes sputter as Russians give up for now on well” <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/05/29/cuba-oil-idUKL2N0EA00W20130529>, TB]

Russian state-owned oil company Zarubezhneft said this week it was giving up for now on a problem-plagued exploration well off Cuba's north-central coast, which brings to an end the communist-led island's only active project in its search for offshore oil fields.¶ The news was not all bad because the company said it would return to the same spot next year. But it was another blow to Cuba's hopes for energy independence, which have acquired new urgency with the March death of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, the communist-led island's top ally and benefactor.¶ The Russians' plan to drill 6,500 meters (21,325 feet) below the sea floor and hopefully find oil appears to have been derailed by the same issue that others have encountered in Cuban waters - difficult geology - as well as problems with its rig, the Songa Mercur, which at one point lost its blowout preventer.¶ "Taking into consideration geological complications, Zarubezhneft and (Cuban state oil company) Cubapetroleo have jointly decided to make changes in the initial drilling program by dividing it into two stages," the company told Reuters this week.¶ "The second stage of exploration work on Block L is due to be launched in 2014," it said, declining to comment further. The well, begun five months ago, was in shallow water about 200 miles (320 km) east of Havana, near the popular tourist destination Cayo Santa Maria.

#### Russia pulling out of Cuba – oil

**Goodhue 2013**

[David. Editor "Last Cuban Offshore Oil Project Ending for Now." - KeysNet.com. N.p., 06 June 2013. Web. 08 July 2013.¶ MA]

A Russian oil company using a Norwegian-owned drilling rig is temporarily pulling out of Cuban waters without finding any significant sources of crude, but industry watchers say it is too soon to dismiss Cuba’s offshore energy potential. The Songa Mercur was searching for oil in at least two prospects near the Bahamas’ exclusive economic zone with Cuba — located fewer than 200 miles from the South Florida coast. The Cuban government announced in late May the state-run Russian company operating the rig, Zarubezhneft, was leaving the area but would return to the same spot in 2014.¶ The announcement has major implications for Cuba’s energy future. The communist island nation is heavily dependent on imports from ally nations like Venezuela for its oil needs.¶ Cuba suffered a major disappointment when several countries were unsuccessful in finding oil in the deep waters of the Florida Straits last year. The area — about 70 miles from Key West — might contain large amounts of oil, but it is in very deep water, the crude is difficult to find and working in the area is highly expensive.¶ Operations in the Straits cost companies about $100 million each in exploratory missions alone, said Jorge Piñon, associate director of the Latin America and Caribbean Energy Program at the University of Texas at Austin.¶ “I have been told that the oil is there, but the traps/structures are very difficult. So oil companies are probably likely to spend their limited capital dollars in other more promising, less risky areas (not only technical but also politically) than Cuba,” Piñon said in an e-mail. “They would rather go to Brazil, Angola, Alaska, U.S. Gulf of Mexico or the new growing market of shale in Argentina.”¶ The Straits exploration — conducted by four international companies on a giant Chinese-built, Italian-owned semi-submersible oil rig — worried both environmentalists and critics of Cuba’s Castro regime. But the operation was largely a bust and only two of the participating companies are still in the region: Malaysia’s Petronas and Gazprom, from Russia. They’re operating in a partnership and are now only conducting “some seismic work,” Piñon said.¶ The first company to work on the rig, Spain’s Repsol, closed its Cuban offices. And Petroleos de Venezuela, or PDVSA, is going through too many financial difficulties to invest again in the risky Straits, according to Piñon. The area near the Bahamas where Zarubezhneft is exploring is much shallower — around 2,000 feet below the surface as opposed to 6,000 feet in the Straits. This makes it a more attractive place for companies like Zarubezhneft to search for offshore fossil fuels.¶ Valentina Matvienko, speaker of the Russian Federation Council — the country’s equivalent of the U.S. Senate — pledged in a May interview with Cuba’s state-run Granma newspaper continued investment and involvement in Cuba’s offshore energy projects.¶ “We are currently negotiating a broad range of projects relating to energy, and Russian companies such as Zarubezhneft are actively involved in oil prospecting in Cuban waters, and this work is going to continue,” Matvienko said.¶ But the company might not use the Songa Mercur when it returns, according to oil industry sources. One of the reasons Zarubezhneft is leaving Cuba is because the rig was having equipment difficulties. Instead, Zarubezhneft may come back in a drill ship, a traditional seagoing vessel with oil-drilling capabilities.¶ However, Lee Hunt, president emeritus of the International Association of Drilling Contractors, said finding a ship that complies with the 52-year-old U.S.-imposed trade embargo against Cuba could be difficult. Such a vessel must have fewer than 10 percent of its parts made in the United States. If the ship is not compliant with the embargo, companies using it could face U.S. sanctions.¶ Geir Karlsen, a Songa Offshore spokesman, told The Reporter his company has no agreement with Zarubezhneft to take the Mercur back to Cuba.¶ Russia and Cuba are not the only countries hoping the Cuba/Bahamas maritime border abounds with crude. The Bahamas Petroleum Co., based out of the Isle of Man, received permission to begin exploratory offshore drilling in the region ahead of a referendum that would give Bahamians a say in the future energy development of their country. This means drilling in the Old Bahamas Channel, south of the Andros Islands, could begin by 2014.¶ The BPC is looking to partner with another oil company in its search for oil. The company is also seeking European investors. Since the area is so close to the Zarubezhneft site, Russia’s success there could reap BPC a financial windfall.¶ “Good news in Cuba would have helped in the search for much-needed capital and/or possible joint venture partners,” Piñon said. “A discovery on the Cuban side would have certainly helped their development momentum.”¶ Natalia Erikssen, a BPC spokeswoman, said the company plans to begin drilling next year regardless of Zarubezhneft’s success or failure in the region.¶ “It won’t have anything to do with Zarubezhneft,” Erikssen said in an e-mail.¶ Hunt said just because no significant discoveries have been found off the Bahamas doesn’t mean the oil isn’t there. “More than one U.S. wildcatter made his fortune on the last roll of the dice,” he said.

### US Influence High

#### US influence in Latin America is high – their authors misunderstand international politics

Duddy and Mora 2013

[Patrick, U.S. ambassador to Venezuela from 2007 until 2010 and is currently visiting senior lecturer at Duke University, and Frank, incoming director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University, and former deputy assistant secretary of Defense, Western Hemisphere, “Latin America: Is U.S. influence waning?”, May 1, http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/05/01/3375160/latin-america-is-us-influence.html]

Is U.S. influence in Latin America on the wane? It depends how you look at it. As President Obama travels to Mexico and Costa Rica, it’s likely the pundits will once again underscore what some perceive to be the eroding influence of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. Some will point to the decline in foreign aid or the absence of an overarching policy with an inspiring moniker like “Alliance for Progress” or “Enterprise Area of the Americas” as evidence that the United States is failing to embrace the opportunities of a region that is more important to this country than ever. The reality is a lot more complicated. Forty-two percent of all U.S. exports flow to the Western Hemisphere. In many ways, U.S. engagement in the Americas is more pervasive than ever, even if more diffused. That is in part because the peoples of the Western Hemisphere are not waiting for governments to choreograph their interactions. A more-nuanced assessment inevitably will highlight the complex, multidimensional ties between the United States and the rest of the hemisphere. In fact, it may be that we need to change the way we think and talk about the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. We also need to resist the temptation to embrace overly reductive yardsticks for judging our standing in the hemisphere. As Moises Naim notes in his recent book, The End of Power, there has been an important change in power distribution in the world away from states toward an expanding and increasingly mobile set of actors that are dramatically shaping the nature and scope of global relationships. In Latin America, many of the most substantive and dynamic forms of engagement are occurring in a web of cross-national relationships involving small and large companies, people-to-people contact through student exchanges and social media, travel and migration. Trade and investment remain the most enduring and measurable dimensions of U.S. relations with the region. It is certainly the case that our economic interests alone would justify more U.S. attention to the region. Many observers who worry about declining U.S. influence in this area point to the rise of trade with China and the presence of European companies and investors. While it is true that other countries are important to the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, it is also still true that the United States is by far the largest and most important economic partner of the region and trade is growing even with those countries with which we do not have free trade agreements. An area of immense importance to regional economies that we often overlook is the exponential growth in travel, tourism and migration. It is commonplace to note the enormous presence of foreign students in the United States but in 2011, according to the Institute of International Education, after Europe, Latin America was the second most popular destination for U.S. university students. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. tourists travel every year to Latin America and the Caribbean helping to support thousands of jobs. From 2006-2011 U.S. non-government organizations, such as churches, think tanks and universities increased the number of partnerships with their regional cohorts by a factor of four. Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean from the United States totaled $64 billion in 2012. Particularly for the smaller economies of Central America and the Caribbean these flows can sometimes constitute more than 10 percent of gross domestic product. Finally, one should not underestimate the resiliency of U.S. soft power in the region. The power of national reputation, popular culture,values and institutions continues to contribute to U.S. influence in ways that are difficult to measure and impossible to quantify. Example: Despite 14 years of strident anti-American rhetoric during the Chávez government, tens of thousand of Venezuelans apply for U.S. nonimmigrant visas every year, including many thousands of Chávez loyalists.

## No Link

### No Link

#### Influence isn’t zero sum and there’s no risk of escalation – their disad is media hype

Davydenko 2012

[Andrey, International Affairs, “J.F.Bertonha: US Hegemony Waning in South America?”, May 16, http://en.interaffairs.ru/experts/281-jfbertonha-us-hegemony-waning-in-south-america.html]

The comeback staged by the recovering Russia across Latin America and Moscow's plans to get entrenched in the region are permanently grabbing the media headlines. The visits frequently paid to South America by key Russian officials are not the only indications of how high the region ranks on the Russian agenda - Bertonha also cites the maneuvers exercised by the Russian Navy in the Caribbean and the engagement Moscow obviously seeks with Nicaragua, Bolivia, Cuba, and especially Venezuela. Still, Bertonha's verdict is that at the moment the influence Russia enjoys in South America is overstated. That may change in a more distant future, but, if we can trust Bertonha's analysis, so far the Russian presence in South America has been more symbolic than real and promises no shifts in the continent's internal strategic disposition. The Russian arms supplies may give Venezuela a shade of confidence vis-a-vis the US, but it is clear that Caracas will never use weaponry against its continental neighbors, plus the Venezuelan oil export to the US continues regardless of Chavez's bombastic anti-Americanism. Bertonha discounts the Russian Navy's flag-waving in the Caribbean, stressing that intervening will be off the table for Moscow if an armed conflict erupts in the region. The US faced a similar dilemma as it maintained a limited military presence in Georgia when the country clashed with Russia: under this type of circumstances, global geopolitical risks easily outweigh regional-scale sympathies. Moreover, Bertonha doubts Russia's ability to project its considerable military might onto parts of the world as remote as South America.

### Influence Inevitable

#### US influence in Latin America inevitable; trade, cultural ties

Ben-Ami 2013

[Shlomo, a former Israeli foreign minister who now serves as Vice President of the Toledo International Center for Peace, “Is the US Losing Latin America?”, http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-new-nature-of-us-influence-in-latin-america-by-shlomo-ben-ami]

Yet it would be a mistake to regard Latin America’s broadening international relations as marking the end of US preeminence. Unlike in the bygone era of superpowers and captive nations, American influence can no longer be defined by the ability to install and depose leaders from the US embassy. To believe otherwise is to ignore how international politics has changed over the last quarter-century. A continent once afflicted by military takeovers has slowly but surely implanted stable democracies. Responsible economic management, poverty-reduction programs, structural reforms, and greater openness to foreign investment have all helped to generate years of low-inflation growth. As a result, the region was able to withstand the ravages of the global financial crisis. The US not only encouraged these changes, but has benefited hugely from them. More than 40% of US exports now go to Mexico and Central and South America, the US’s fastest-growing export destination. Mexico is America’s second-largest foreign market (valued at $215 billion in 2012). US exports to Central America have risen by 94% over the past six years; imports from the region have risen by 87%. And the US continues to be the largest foreign investor on the continent. American interests are evidently well served by having democratic, stable, and increasingly prosperous neighbors. This new reality also demands a different type of diplomacy – one that recognizes the diverse interests of the continent. For example, an emerging power such as Brazil wants more respect on the world stage. Obama blundered when he dismissed a 2010 deal on Iran’s nuclear program mediated by Brazil and Turkey (despite having earlier endorsed the talks). Other countries might benefit from US efforts to promote democracy and socioeconomic ties, as Obama’s recent trips to Mexico and Costa Rica show. Trade relations provide another all-important lever. President Sebastian Piñera of Chile visited the White House earlier this week to discuss, among other things, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), an ambitious trade agreement that might encompass New Zealand, Singapore, Australia, Mexico, Canada, and Japan. President Ollanta Humala of Peru is expected in the White House next week, while Vice President Joe Biden is scheduled to visit Latin America soon after. Language and culture matter, too. Given the extraordinary growth of Latinos’ influence in the US, it is almost inconceivable that America could lose its unique status in the region to China or Russia, let alone Iran.

## Impact Turns/Takeouts

### China Turn

#### US influence in the region key to crowd out China

Dowd 2012

[Alan, Senior Fellow with the American Security Council Foundation) 2012 “Crisis in the America's,” http://www.ascfusa.org/content\_pages/view/crisisinamericas]

Focused on military operations in the Middle East, nuclear threats in Iran and North Korea, and the global threat of terrorism, U.S. policymakers have neglected a growing challenge right here in the Western Hemisphere: the expanding influence and reach of China.¶ Eyeing energy resources to keep its economy humming, China is engaged in a flurry of investing and spending in Latin America.¶ In Costa Rica, China is funding a $1.24-billion upgrade of the country’s oil refinery; bankrolling an $83-million soccer stadium; backing infrastructure and telecommunications improvements; and pouring millions into a new police academy.¶ In Colombia, China is planning a massive “dry canal” to link the country’s Pacific and Atlantic coasts by rail. At either terminus, there will be Chinese ports; in between, there will be Chinese assembly facilities, logistics operations and distribution plants; and on the Pacific side, there will be dedicated berths to ship Colombian coal outbound to China.¶ In mid-January, a Chinese-built oil rig arrived in Cuba to begin drilling in Cuba’s swath of the Gulf of Mexico. Reuters reports that Spanish, Russian, Malaysian and Norwegian firms will use the rig to extract Cuban oil. For now, China is focusing on onshore oil extraction in Cuba.¶ New offshore discoveries will soon catapult Brazil into a top-five global oil producer. With some 38 billion barrels of recoverable oil off its coast, Brazil expects to pump 4.9 million barrels per day by 2020, as the Washington Times reports, and China has used generous loans to position itself as the prime beneficiary of Brazilian oil. China’s state-run oil and banking giants have inked technology-transfer, chemical, energy and real-estate deals with Brazil. Plus, as the Times details, China came to the rescue of Brazil’s main oil company when it sought financing for its massive drilling plans, pouring $10 billion into the project. A study in Joint Force Quarterly (JFQ) adds that Beijing plunked down $3.1 billion for a slice of Brazil’s vast offshore oil fields.¶ The JFQ study reveals just how deep and wide Beijing is spreading its financial influence in Latin America: $28 billion in loans to Venezuela; a $16.3-billion commitment to develop Venezuelan oil reserves; $1 billion for Ecuadoran oil; $4.4 billion to develop Peruvian mines; $10 billion to help Argentina modernize its rail system; $3.1 billion to purchase Argentina’s petroleum company outright. The New York Times adds that Beijing has lent Ecuador $1 billion to build a hydroelectric plant.¶ There is good and bad to Beijing’s increased interest and investment in the Western Hemisphere. Investment fuels development, and much of Latin America is happily accelerating development in the economic, trade, technology and infrastructure spheres. But China’s riches come with strings.¶ For instance, in exchange for Chinese development funds and loans, Venezuela agreed to increase oil shipments to China from 380,000 barrels per day to one million barrels per day. It’s worth noting that the Congressional Research Service has reported concerns in Washington that Hugo Chavez might try to supplant his U.S. market with China. Given that Venezuela pumps an average of 1.5 million barrels of oil per day for the U.S.—or about 11 percent of net oil imports—the results would be devastating for the U.S.¶ That brings us to the security dimension of China’s checkbook diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere.¶ Officials with the U.S. Southern Command conceded as early as 2006 that Beijing had “approached every country in our area of responsibility” and provided military exchanges, aid or training to Ecuador, Jamaica, Bolivia, Cuba, Chile and Venezuela.¶ The JFQ study adds that China has “an important and growing presence in the region’s military institutions.” Most Latin American nations, including Mexico, “send officers to professional military education courses in the PRC.” In Ecuador, Venezuela and Bolivia, Beijing has begun to sell “sophisticated hardware…such as radars and K-8 and MA-60 aircraft.” The JFQ report concludes, ominously, that Chinese defense firms “are likely to leverage their experience and a growing track record for their goods to expand their market share in the region, with the secondary consequence being that those purchasers will become more reliant on the associated Chinese logistics, maintenance, and training infrastructures that support those products.”¶ Put it all together, and the southern flank of the United States is exposed to a range of new security challenges.¶ To be sure, much of this is a function of China’s desire to secure oil markets. But there’s more at work here than China’s thirst for oil. Like a global chess match, China is probing Latin America and sending a message that just as Washington has trade and military ties in China’s neighborhood, China is developing trade and military ties in America’s neighborhood.¶ This is a direct challenge to U.S. primacy in the region—a challenge that must be answered.¶ First, Washington needs to relearn an obvious truth—that China’s rulers do not share America’s values—and needs to shape and conduct its China policy in that context.¶ Beijing has no respect for human rights. Recall that in China, an estimated 3-5 million people are rotting away in laogai slave-labor camps, many of them “guilty” of political dissent or religious activity; democracy activists are rounded up and imprisoned; freedom of speech and religion and assembly do not exist; and internal security forces are given shoot-to-kill orders in dealing with unarmed citizens. Indeed, Beijing viewed the Arab Spring uprisings not as an impetus for political reform, but as reason “to launch its harshest crackdown on dissent in at least a decade,” according to Director of National Intelligence James Clapper.¶ In short, the ends always justify the means in Beijing. And that makes all the difference when it comes to foreign and defense policy. As Reagan counseled during the Cold War, “There is no true international security without respect for human rights.”¶ Second, the U.S. must stop taking the Western Hemisphere for granted, and instead must reengage in its own neighborhood economically, politically and militarily.¶ That means no more allowing trade deals—and the partners counting on them—to languish. Plans for a hemispheric free trade zone have faltered and foundered. The trade-expansion agreements with Panama and Colombia were left in limbo for years, before President Obama finally signed them into law in 2011.¶ Reengagement means reviving U.S. diplomacy. The Wall Street Journal reports that due to political wrangling in Washington, the State Department position focused on the Western Hemisphere has been staffed by an interim for nearly a year, while six Western Hemisphere ambassadorial posts (Uruguay, Venezuela, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Barbados) remain empty.¶ Reengagement means reversing plans to slash defense spending. The Joint Forces Command noted in 2008 that China has “a deep respect for U.S. military power.” We cannot overstate how important this has been to keeping the peace. But with the United States in the midst of massive military retrenchment, one wonders how long that reservoir of respect will last.¶ Reengagement also means revitalizing security ties. A good model to follow might be what’s happening in China’s backyard. To deter China and prevent an accidental war, the U.S. is reviving its security partnerships all across the Asia-Pacific region. Perhaps it’s time to do the same in Latin America. We should remember that many Latin American countries—from Mexico and Panama to Colombia and Chile—border the Pacific. Given Beijing’s actions, it makes sense to bring these Latin American partners on the Pacific Rim into the alliance of alliances that is already stabilizing the Asia-Pacific region.¶ Finally, all of this needs to be part of a revived Monroe Doctrine.¶ Focusing on Chinese encroachment in the Americas, this “Monroe Doctrine 2.0” would make it clear to Beijing that the United States welcomes China’s efforts to conduct trade in the Americas but discourages any claims of control—implied or explicit—by China over territories, properties or facilities in the Americas. In addition, Washington should make it clear to Beijing that the American people would look unfavorably upon the sale of Chinese arms or the basing of Chinese advisors or military assets in the Western Hemisphere.¶ In short, what it was true in the 19th and 20th centuries must remain true in the 21st: There is room for only one great power in the Western Hemisphere.

#### Chinese stronghold in Latin America will trigger a nationalistic land grad for Taiwan

Fergusson 2012

[Robbie, Researcher at Royal Society for the Arts, Former Conference & Research Assistant at Security Watch) 2012 “The Chinese Challenge to the Monroe Doctrine,” http://www.e-ir.info/2012/07/23/does-chinese-growth-in-latin-america-threaten-american-interests/]

Taiwan – domestic, or foreign policy?¶ China’s goals in the region amount to more than the capture of natural resources. Although the People’s Republic of China considers resolution of the Taiwan issue to be a domestic issue, it is with some irony that one of China’s main foreign policy goals is to isolate Taipei internationally. The PRC and the ROC compete directly for international recognition among all the states in the world. . Nowhere is this more evident than in Latin America, where 12 of the 23 nations that still have official diplomatic relations with the ROC reside.¶ The historical background¶ Following the mainland Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the nationalist Kuomintang retreated to the island of Formosa (Taiwan) where it continued to claim to be the legitimate government of all of China. In June 1950 the United States intervened by placing its 7th fleet in the Taiwan straits to stop a conclusive military resolution to the civil war and slowly the battlefield became primarily political, concerned with legitimacy.¶ When the United Nations was formed in 1945, the Republic of China (ROC) became one of the five permanent members of the Security Council. This gave the ROC a de facto advantage over the PRC in attaining recognition from other nation states; particularly as the diplomatic clout of the hegemonic United States supported its position as the true representative of the Chinese people, until the rapprochement of the 1970s, when the Nixon administration wished to improve ties with the de facto rulers of China in order to exploit the Sino-Soviet split. UN Resolution 2758 granted the ’China seat’ to the PRC at the expense of the ROC who were in effect exiled from the organization, and the famous 1972 visit of President Nixon to China further added legitimacy to the communist regime. All this resulted in a thawing of world opinion, and gradually as the durability and permanence of the PRC regime became ingrained, countries began switching their diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing.¶ The economics of international recognition¶ In the Americas, the PRC had international recognition and longstanding support from ideological allies such as Cuba. However, the ROC has maintained more diplomatic support in the Americas than any other region, mainly due to the small nature of the states involved and the importance of Taiwanese aid to their economies. Li notes that “from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, roughly 10 percent of Taiwan’s direct foreign investment (FDI) went to Latin America and the Caribbean,” [51] highlighting the concerted effort made in the region. Economic solidarity is increasingly important to the formation of the Taiwan-Latin America relationship, for two reasons. The first is that for Latin American states, the decision of which China to support is less ideological and political than it ever has been; which makes the decision a straight up economic zero-sum choice. The second is that Latin America is home to natural resources which are of great significance to the hungry growing economies of the PRC and the ROC regardless of international recognition.¶ However, while the decision is not political for Latin American countries, for Taiwan, every country which switches its recognition to the PRC damages its legitimacy as a nation state in the international arena. The Table below shows the designation of diplomatic recognition in the region in 2008.¶ Countries Recognising the PRC (China)Countries Recognising the ROC (Taiwan)Central AmericaMexico, Costa RicaEl Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, PanamaCaribbeanAntigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad & TobagoBelize, Dominican Republic, Haiti, St Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the GrenadinesSouth AmericaArgentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, VenezuelaParaguay¶ On the other hand, for the PRC, every state which withdraws its support for the ROC takes it one step closer to being in a position where it can resolve the ‘Taiwan issue’ unilaterally. Subsequently, undermining Taiwan is of the utmost importance to China, and it has taken to ‘outbidding’ Taiwan in offers of foreign aid, a strategy made possible by the decline in aid from the defunct Soviet Union, and the West, which is pre occupied with terrorism and the Middle East. Li notes that “the region’s leaders have turned to Asia for help to promote trade and financial assistance, and consequently played the PRC and Taiwan against each other.” [53] Despite its smaller size, Taiwan has fared remarkably well in this bidding war; focusing its aid investments on infrastructure such as stadiums in St Kitts & Nevis for the Cricket World Cup in 2007.¶ However, even Taiwan‘s economy can be put under strain by the seemingly relentless stream of foreign aid which has brought only debateable and mild gains to the Taiwanese cause. This has contributed to the PRC picking off the few remaining supporters of the ROC – take for example, the Dominican case.¶ In early 2004, Commonwealth of Dominica asked Taipei for a $58 million aid, which is unrelated to public welfare. The Caribbean nation had relied on Taiwan to develop its agriculture-based economy since 1983. Diplomatic relationship was soon broken after Taipei turned down the request. [54]¶ This incident showcased the fact that in economic terms, the PRC is winning the battle for Latin America.¶ Political strategies of the PRC¶ In political terms too; the PRC is in an advantageous position, thanks in part again to its position within the UN. While it can be argued that China “provides incentives but does not threaten harm to induce countries to defect from recognizing Taiwan,” [55] the reality is that the use of force and direct harm are not the only means available to an economic entity as powerful as China. It refuses to maintain official relations with any state that recognises the ROC; an action which can be quite prohibitive to the country being able to take advantage of the growing Chinese market. Although Domínguez suggests that the PRC “has not been punitive toward those states that still recognize the Republic of China (Taiwan),” [56] the legitimacy of this claim has to be brought into question – for example “in June 1996, China fought the extension of the UN mission in Haiti, to punish the Caribbean nation for its appeal for UN acceptance of Taiwan.” [57] This incident showed that China is prepared to use its global clout to play spoiler and apply indirect pressure on countries to adopt its position. Similarly, China’s experience with one-party rule has taught it the importance of party-to-party relations in addition to state-to-state relations, further cementing the PRC by establishing a relationship based on goodwill and common understanding. Indeed by the start of 1998 “the CCP had established relations with almost all major political parties in the countries that were Taiwan’s diplomatic allies in Latin America,” [58] further isolating the ROC.¶ The effect on American interests¶ Were the ROC to be deserted by its remaining allies in Latin America, the USA would be disadvantaged in attempting to maintain the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. A Taiwan that was not recognised by any state from the Americas, or Europe (with the exception of the Vatican) would not be seen as a genuine sovereign entity whose defence would be more important than the upkeep of good relations between China and the West. As China’s economic and political position in the world improves vis-à-vis both America and Taiwan, so might its ambitions. The U.S.A might find itself in a position where it could no longer withstand the diplomatic pressure to allow the PRC to conclude a settlement on Taiwan, perhaps by force.

#### Nuclear war

Lowther 2013

William Lowther 3-16, Taipei Times, citing a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 3/16/13, “Taiwan could spark nuclear war: report,”

[http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2013/03/16/2003557211](http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2013/03/16/2003557211 Taiwan)

[Taiwan](http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2013/03/16/2003557211 Taiwan) is the most likely potential crisis that could trigger a nuclear war between China and the US, a new academic report concludes.¶ “Taiwan remains the single most plausible and dangerous source of tension and conflict between the US and China,” says the 42-page report by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).¶ Prepared by the CSIS’ Project on Nuclear Issues and resulting from a year-long study, the report emphasizes that Beijing continues to be set on a policy to prevent Taiwan’s independence, while at the same time the US maintains the capability to come to Taiwan’s defense.¶ “Although tensions across the Taiwan Strait have subsided since both Taipei and Beijing embraced a policy of engagement in 2008, the situation remains combustible, complicated by rapidly diverging cross-strait military capabilities and persistent political disagreements,” the report says.¶ In a footnote, it quotes senior fellow at the US Council on Foreign Relations Richard Betts describing Taiwan as “the main potential flashpoint for the US in East Asia.”¶ The report also quotes Betts as saying that neither Beijing nor Washington can fully control developments that might ignite a Taiwan crisis.¶ “This is a classic recipe for surprise, miscalculation and uncontrolled escalation,” Betts wrote in a separate study of his own.¶ The CSIS study says: “For the foreseeable future Taiwan is the contingency in which nuclear weapons would most likely become a major factor, because the fate of the island is intertwined both with the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party and the reliability of US defense commitments in the Asia-Pacific region.”¶ Titled Nuclear Weapons and US-China Relations, the study says disputes in the East and South China seas appear unlikely to lead to major conflict between China and the US, but they do “provide kindling” for potential conflict between the two nations because the disputes implicate a number of important regional interests, including the interests of treaty allies of the US.¶ The danger posed by flashpoints such as Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula and maritime demarcation disputes is magnified by the potential for mistakes, the study says.¶ “Although Beijing and Washington have agreed to a range of crisis management mechanisms, such as the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement and the establishment of a direct hotline between the Pentagon and the Ministry of Defense, the bases for miscommunication and misunderstanding remain and draw on deep historical reservoirs of suspicion,” the report says.¶ For example, it says, it is unclear whether either side understands what kinds of actions would result in a military or even nuclear response by the other party.¶ To make things worse, “neither side seems to believe the other’s declared policies and intentions, suggesting that escalation management, already a very uncertain endeavor, could be especially difficult in any conflict,” it says.¶ Although conflict “mercifully” seems unlikely at this point, the report concludes that “it cannot be ruled out and may become increasingly likely if we are unwise or unlucky.”¶ The report says: “With both sides possessing and looking set to retain formidable nuclear weapons arsenals, such a conflict would be tremendously dangerous and quite possibly devastating.”

### A2 Russian Econ

#### No economy impact

Goodrich and Zeihan 2009

[Lauren, Stratfor's Director of Analysis and Senior Eurasia analyst, and Peter, Vice President of Analysis at Stratfor, “The Financial Crisis and the Six Pillars of Russian Strength,” March 3 2009, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090302_financial_crisis_and_six_pillars_russian_strength>]

Thus, while Russia's financial sector may be getting torn apart, the state does not really count on that sector for domestic cohesion or stability, or for projecting power abroad. Russia knows it lacks a good track record financially, so it depends on -- and has shored up where it can -- six other pillars to maintain its (self-proclaimed) place as a major international player. The current financial crisis would crush the last five pillars for any other state, but in Russia, it has only served to strengthen these bases. Over the past few years, there was a certain window of opportunity for Russia to resurge while Washington was preoccupied with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This window has been kept open longer by the West's lack of worry over the Russian resurgence given the financial crisis. But others closer to the Russian border understand that Moscow has many tools more potent than finance with which to continue reasserting itself.

### A2 Russia War

#### No chance of US-Russia war

Graham 2007

[Thomas Graham, senior advisor on Russia in the US National Security Council staff 2002-2007, September 2007, "Russia in Global Affairs” July - September 2007, The Dialectics of Strength and Weakness]

An astute historian of Russia, Martin Malia, wrote several years ago that “**Russia has** at different times **been demonized** or divinized by Western opinion less because of her real role in Europe than **because of the fears and frustrations**, or hopes and aspirations, **generated within European society** by its own domestic problems.” **Such is the case today**. To be sure, **mounting Western concerns** about Russia are a consequence of Russian policies that appear to undermine Western interests, but they **are also a reflection of declining confidence in our own abilities** and the efficacy of our own policies. Ironically, **this growing fear and distrust of Russia come at a time when Russia is** arguably **less threatening to the** West, and the **U**nited **S**tates in particular, **than it has been at any time since the end of the Second World War. Russia does not champion a totalitarian ideology** intent on our destruction, **its military poses no threat** to sweep across Europe, **its economic growth depends on constructive commercial relations** with Europe, **and its strategic arsenal** – while still capable of annihilating the United States – **is under more reliable control than it has been in the past fifteen years and the threat of a strategic strike approaches** **zero probability**. Political gridlock in key Western countries, however, precludes the creativity, risk-taking, and subtlety needed to advance our interests on issues over which we are at odds with Russia while laying the basis for more constructive lon-term relations with Russia.

### A2 Russia Relations

#### They’re resilient

VOA News 11

[“Putin Presidency Unlikely to Derail US-Russia Relations” 10/7 <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Putin-Presidency-Unlikely-to-Derail-US-Russia-Relations-131345683.html>]

Many experts agree with Legvold that **there will not be any real change in U.S.-Russia relations with Vladimir Putin back as president**. Matthew **Rojansky at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, says Putin, as prime minister**, if not calling all the shots, at least **approved the key decisions related to U.S. relations**. “So for example, **I don’t see New START [strategic arms agreement] being rolled back," said Rojansky. "I don’t see cooperation on Afghanistan being rolled back. The Libya [U.N.] resolution [imposing a no-fly zone] which Russia didn’t block** was a difficult call and Putin certainly had reservations and you heard him expressing those reservations. But did he ultimately come to some kind of consensus with Medvedev? Clearly he did. I think the two of them operate as a unit.” Rojansky believes that **while the substance of the U.S.-Russia relationship may not change, the tone might. “Obama has invested very heavily in his relationship with Medvedev,"** he said. "It made sense. It was relatively easy for him because he and Medvedev come from a similar kind of origin in the sense of both being lawyers, both being technology oriented, both being kind of globalists in their outlook. Putin just doesn’t have that. **And I don’t see Putin and Obama pushing the relationship to be very active by sheer force of personality and interest in one another**. I just don’t think that’s going to happen**.” The analysts believe one thing is for sure:** **the U.S.-Russia relationship has grown over the years to such an extent that they say a return to the tension-filled Cold War days is virtually impossible.**

#### Relations don’t solve anything

Bovt 2012

[Columnist-Moscow Times, “Whether Obama or Romney, the Reset Is Dead,” http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/whether-obama-or-romney-the-reset-is-dead/467947.html#ixzz274U7VOyl]

**During every U.S. presidential election campaign, there is a debate** in Russia **over whether the Republican or Democratic** candidate **would be more beneficial for the Kremlin. Russian analysts and politicians always fail to understand that Americans have shown little interest in foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Even when foreign policy is mentioned** in the campaign, **Russia is far down the list as a priority item**. The volume of U.S-Russian trade remains small. The recent Exxon-Rosneft deal notwithstanding, U.S. interest in Russia's energy projects has fallen, particularly as the Kremlin has increased its role in this sector. To make matters worse, the United States is determined to establish clean energy and energy independence, while Russia's gas exports are feeling the pinch from stiff competition with the U.S. development of shale gas production. Of course, traditional areas of cooperation remain: the transit of shipments to and from Afghanistan through Russia, Iran's nuclear program and the struggle against international terrorism. But the transit route into Afghanistan cannot, by itself, greatly influence bilateral relations as a whole, and **progress** on the other two points seems to have **reached a plateau** beyond which **little potential remains for** bringing the two countries into **closer cooperation. On the positive side, a new visa agreement came into force this week that will facilitate greater contact between both countries' citizens. But it will be years before that significantly influences overall U.S.-Russian relations**. A new agreement regarding child adoptions has also been implemented after a few disturbing adoption stories prompted Russia's media, with the help of government propaganda, to spoil the U.S. image in Russia. Meanwhile, **both** U.S. President Barack **Obama and** Republican candidate Mitt **Romney support the U.S. missile defense program in principle**, although the exact form and scope of its deployment differ among the candidates. Even though President Vladimir Putin, during his interview with RT state television last week, expressed guarded optimism over the prospect of reaching an agreement on missile defense with Obama, **Russia seems to underestimate the degree to which Americans are fixated on missile defense as a central component of their national security.** **It is highly unlikely that any U.S. administration** **— Democratic or Republican —** **will ever agree to major concessions on missile defense.** **It even seemed that Kremlin propagandists were happy when** in March **Romney called Russia the United States' No. 1 foe**. They were given another present when Obama, addressing the Democratic National Convention last week, said Romney's comment only proved that he lacked foreign policy experience and was locked in Cold War thinking. **For the next two months, however, the two candidates are unlikely to devote muc h attention to Russia.** **Russia's internal politics will** also **be** **one of the key factors shaping future U.S.-Russian relations.** The two-year jail sentence slapped on three members of Pussy Riot for their anti-Putin prayer in Moscow's main cathedral has already become a subject of discussion between Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. **Even the most pragmatic "pro-reset**" **U.S**. **administration would criticize** **to one degree or another Russia's poor record on human rights. It appears that** **Russia is moving increasingly toward confrontation rather than** rapprochement **with the West. The Kremlin now seems fully committed to spreading the myth that the U.S. State Department is the cause behind most of Russia's domestic problems** and is bent on undermining its national security by deploying missile defense installations in Europe and by supporting the opposition. There are other disturbing signals as well. Take, for example, the United **Russia bill that would prohibit Russian officials from owning bank accounts and property overseas, with particular attention paid to their holdings in the West. The ideological underpinning of this bill is that assets located in the West are tantamount to betrayal of the motherland. Then there is Russia's opposition to the U.S. Magnitsky Act.** The Kremlin interprets this initiative as yet another confirmation of its suspicions that Washington is conspiring against it and that the bill's real U.S. motive is to blackmail Russian officials by threatening to freeze their overseas bank accounts and property. **An increase in these anti-Western attitudes** **does not bode well for** U.S.-Russian relations, even if Obama is re-elected in November. Regardless of which candidate wins, **the reset is bound to** **either slowly die a natural death under Obama or be extinguished outright under Romney. As a result, the most we can likely expect from U.S.-Russian relations in the next four years is cooperation on a limited range of mundane issue**s. Under these conditions, avoiding excessive anti-Russian or anti-U.S. rhetoric from both sides would itself be considered a major achievement in bilateral relations.